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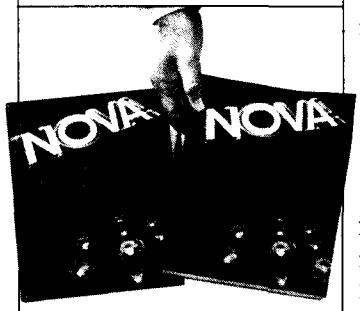

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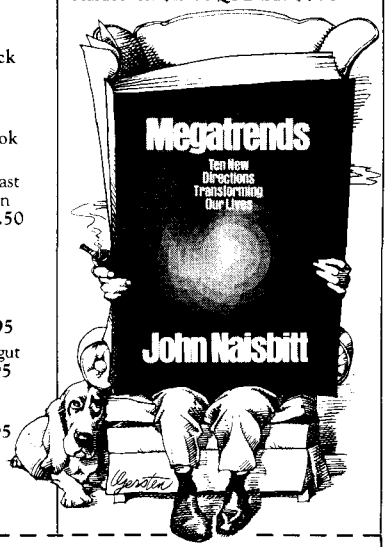

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Dear Reader,

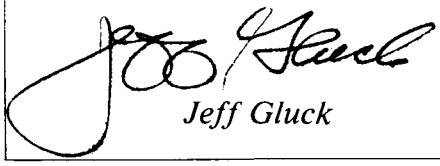
You are holding the latest issue of *Saturday Review,* as much an American institution as a magazine can be. For fifty-eight years, through seemingly countless changes of ownership, it has reported, preached, stimulated and, most importantly, *endured.* When we learned last summer of its impending demise, we decided to investigate the possibility of keeping it alive. We were accused of audacity, at the least. How could a young publisher from the Midwest possibly revive a magazine that was, as publishing experts assured us, irretrievably dead?

We approached the task with the conviction that business practices, not editorial content, had led the magazine to an untimely death. We were certain that there were a great many people out there who wanted *Saturday Review* to continue. Judging from our mail, we were right. Included in that number were many of the former columnists and writers, who for the most part were eager to participate. No doubt, it took a certain leap of faith for them to accept our plans to move the magazine's headquarters to, in the words of one critic, "Columbia, Missouri, of all places."

While we recognize that New York certainly remains the cultural hub around which much of the artistic world revolves, we see no problem, in this age of computers, express mail and telephones, in publishing from the Midwest. Our columnists simply mail their copy across country instead of across town.

All subscriptions have been extended to cover the period of time that publication was suspended. The obvious major change is that we are publishing bi-monthly instead of monthly, hence the lower yearly subscription rate. We think this frequency will allow us to offer a deeper, more analytical coverage of the arts. Our columnists will be less concerned with covering the obvious, more involved in uncovering the meaningful.

Ultimately, of course, you the reader will decide the fate of *Saturday Review.* Read this first issue and trust that we intend to do as well or better. We're acutely aware of the standards set by the magazine's past—we hope you'll join us in affirming its future.



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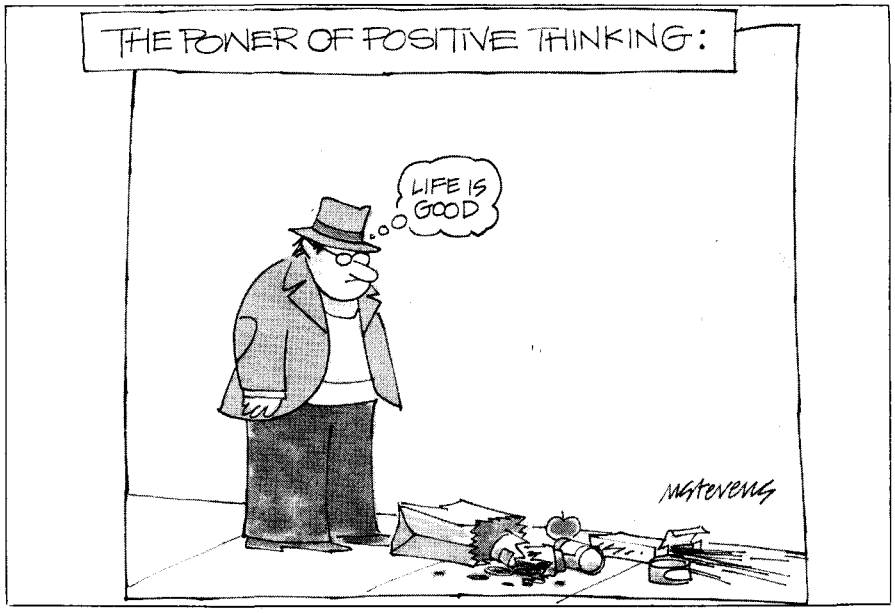

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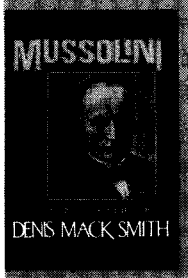

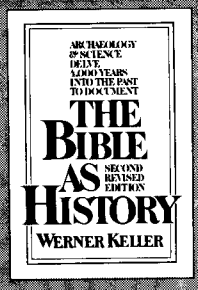
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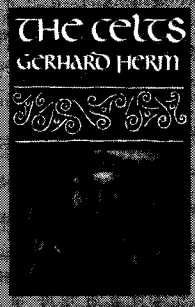

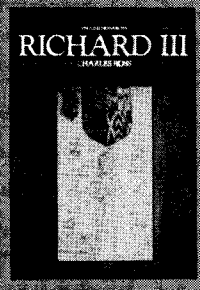

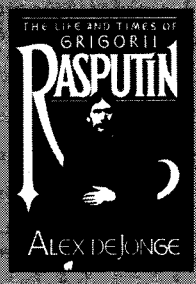

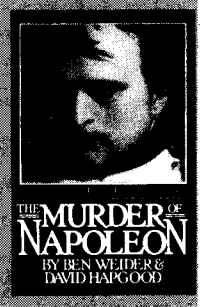

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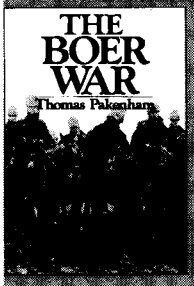

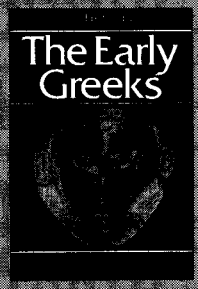

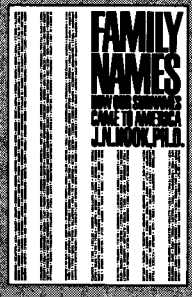

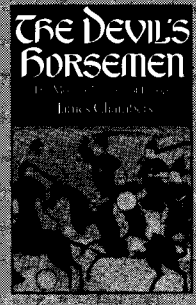

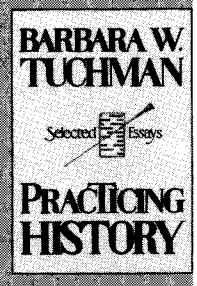

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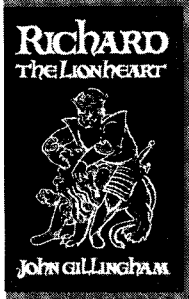

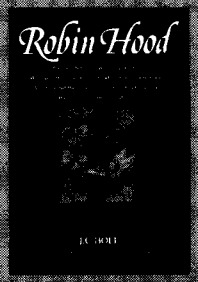

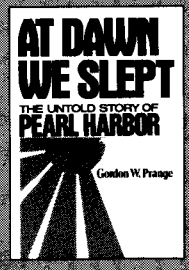

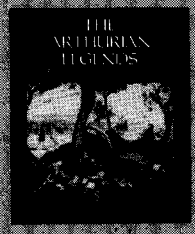

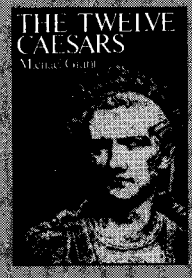

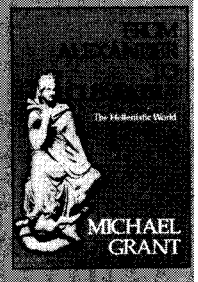

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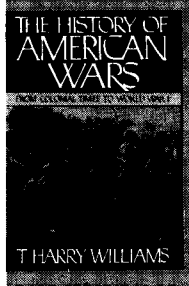

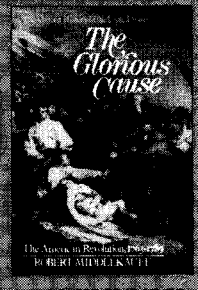

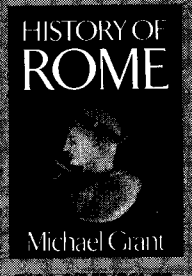

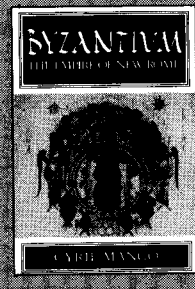

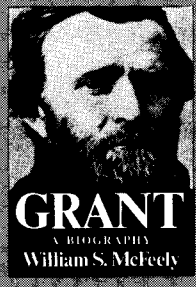

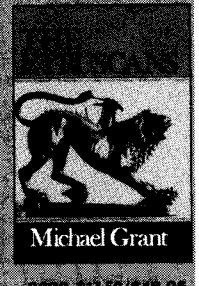

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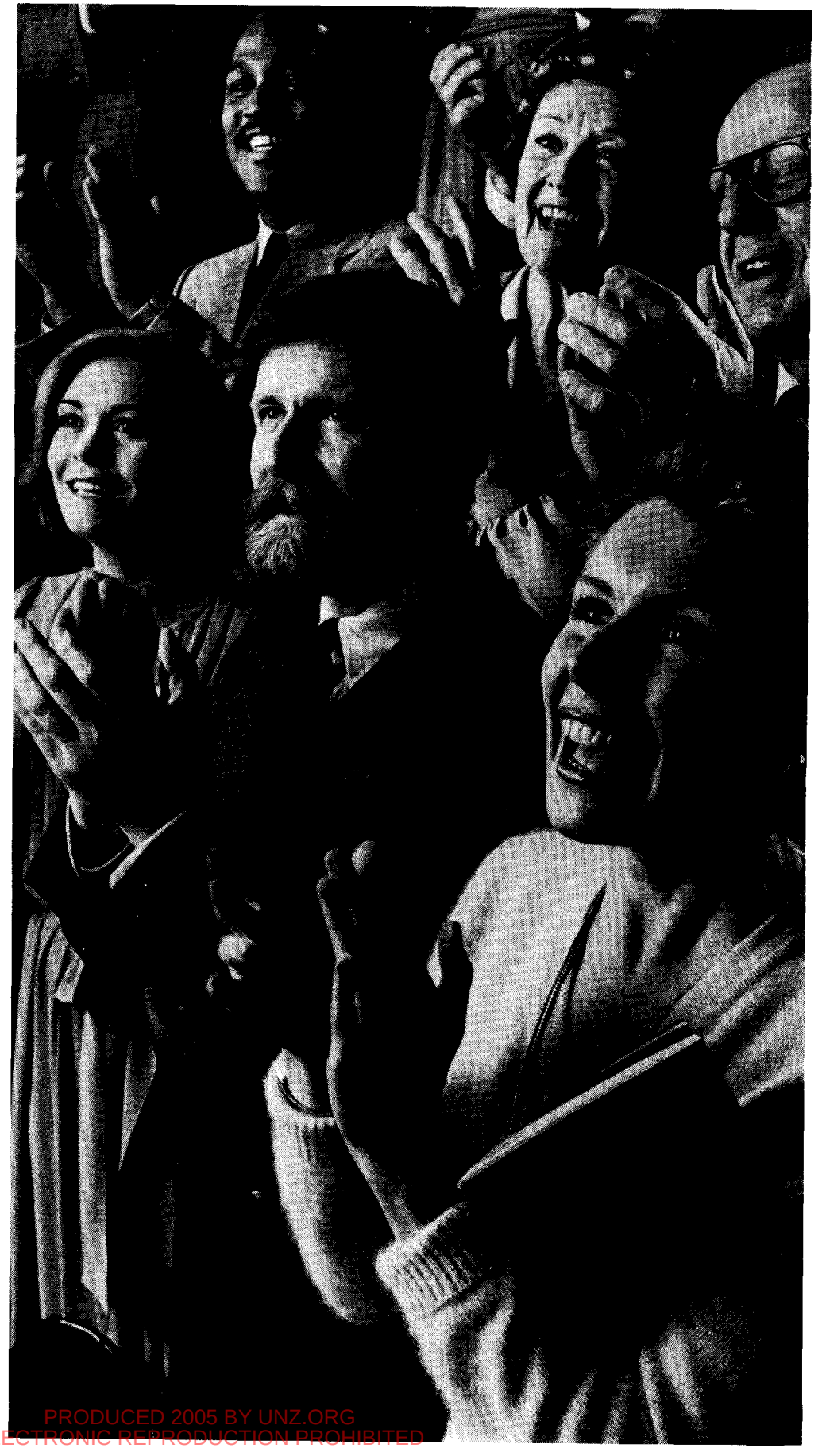

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MARCH-APRIL 1983

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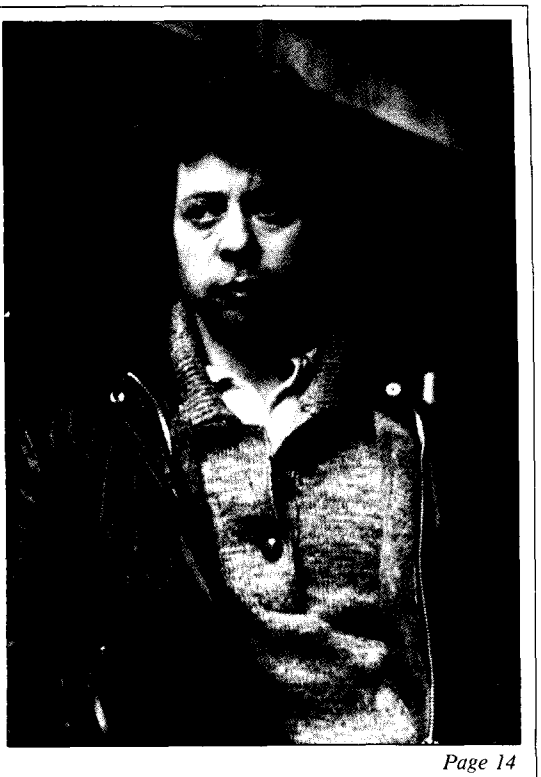

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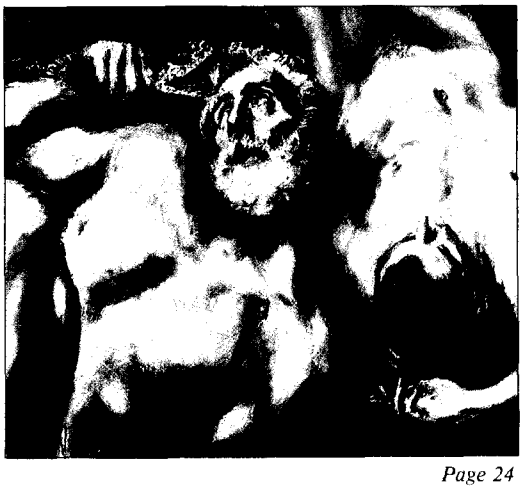

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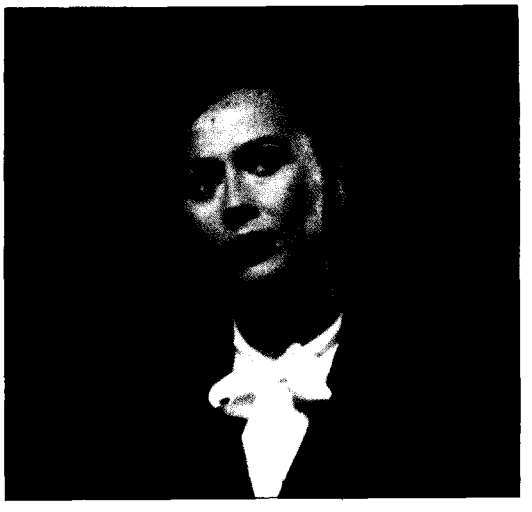

MARTHA SWOPE

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Cover Photo: Eric Liebowitz

SATURDAY REVIEW (ISSN 0361-1655) published bi-monthly by SATURDAY REVIEW MAGAZINE COMPANY. Jeffrey M. Gluck, President, Debra K. Gluck, Vice President. 1905 University Avenue, Columbia, MO 65201 (314) 875-3003. Subscription price in the U.S. and its possessions: one year—$15; two years—$28; three years—$41 (Canada and Pan Am—additional postage $3 per year; all other countries—$10 per year) Vol. 9, No. 7 March/April 1983. Back issues $2.50 each plus $1.00 postage and handling. Second-class postage paid at Columbia, Mo., and at Lincoln, Neb. Postmaster: Please send address changes to Subscription Dept., SATURDAY REVIEW, P.O. Box 10010, Des Moines, Iowa 50340. © 1983 by SATURDAY REVIEW MAGAZINE COMPANY. All rights reserved under the Berne and Pan-American copyright conventions. Reproduction in whole or in part of any article (in English or other languages) without permission is prohibited. Printed in the United States of America. Available also in 35mm microfilm and microfiche. SATURDAY REVIEW MAGAZINE COMPANY assumes no responsibility for any noncommissioned manuscripts, photographs, drawings, or other material. No such material will be returned unless submitted with a self-addressed envelope and sufficient postage. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Subscription Dept., SATURDAY REVIEW, P.O. Box 10010, Des Moines, Iowa 50340.

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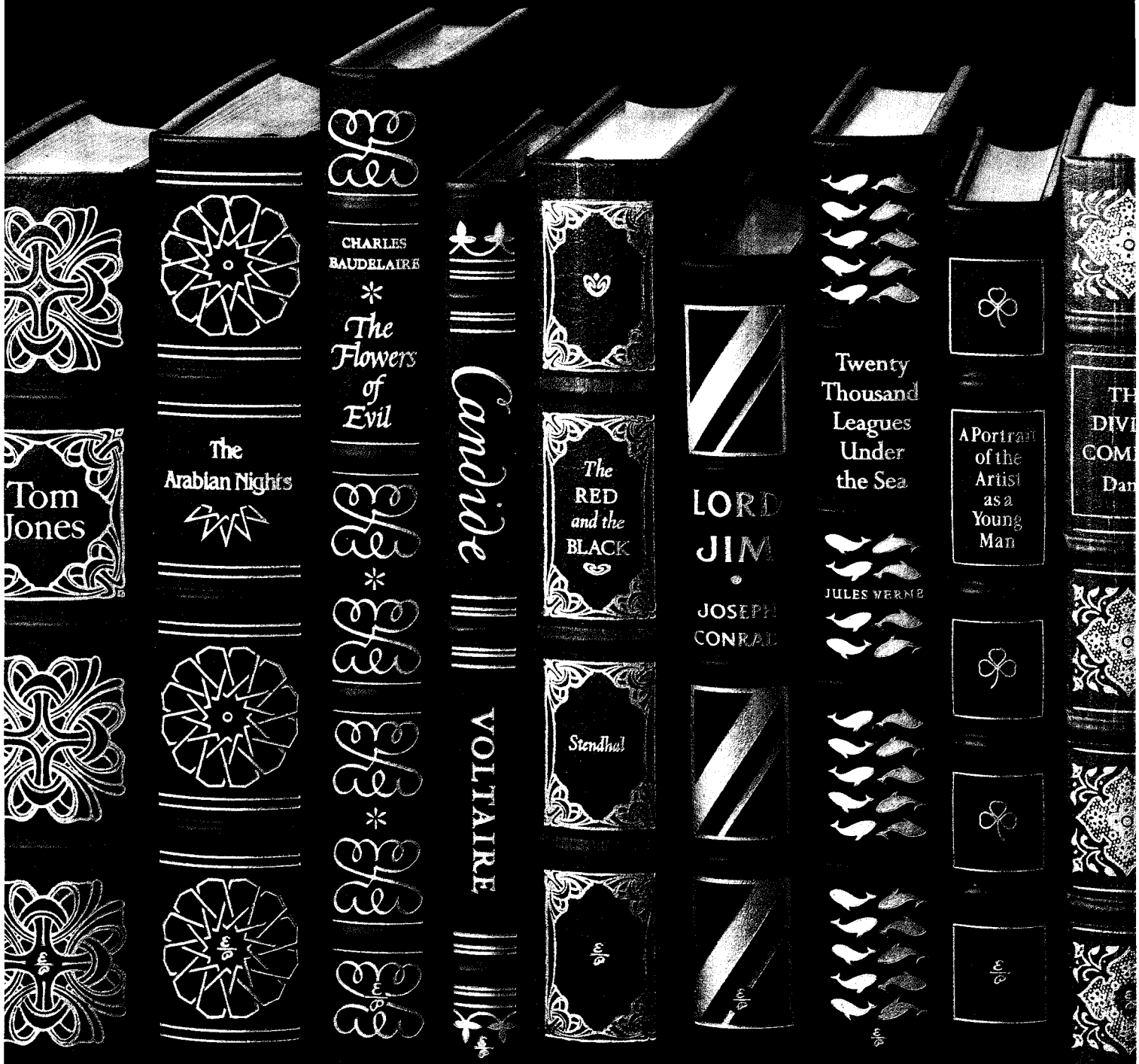

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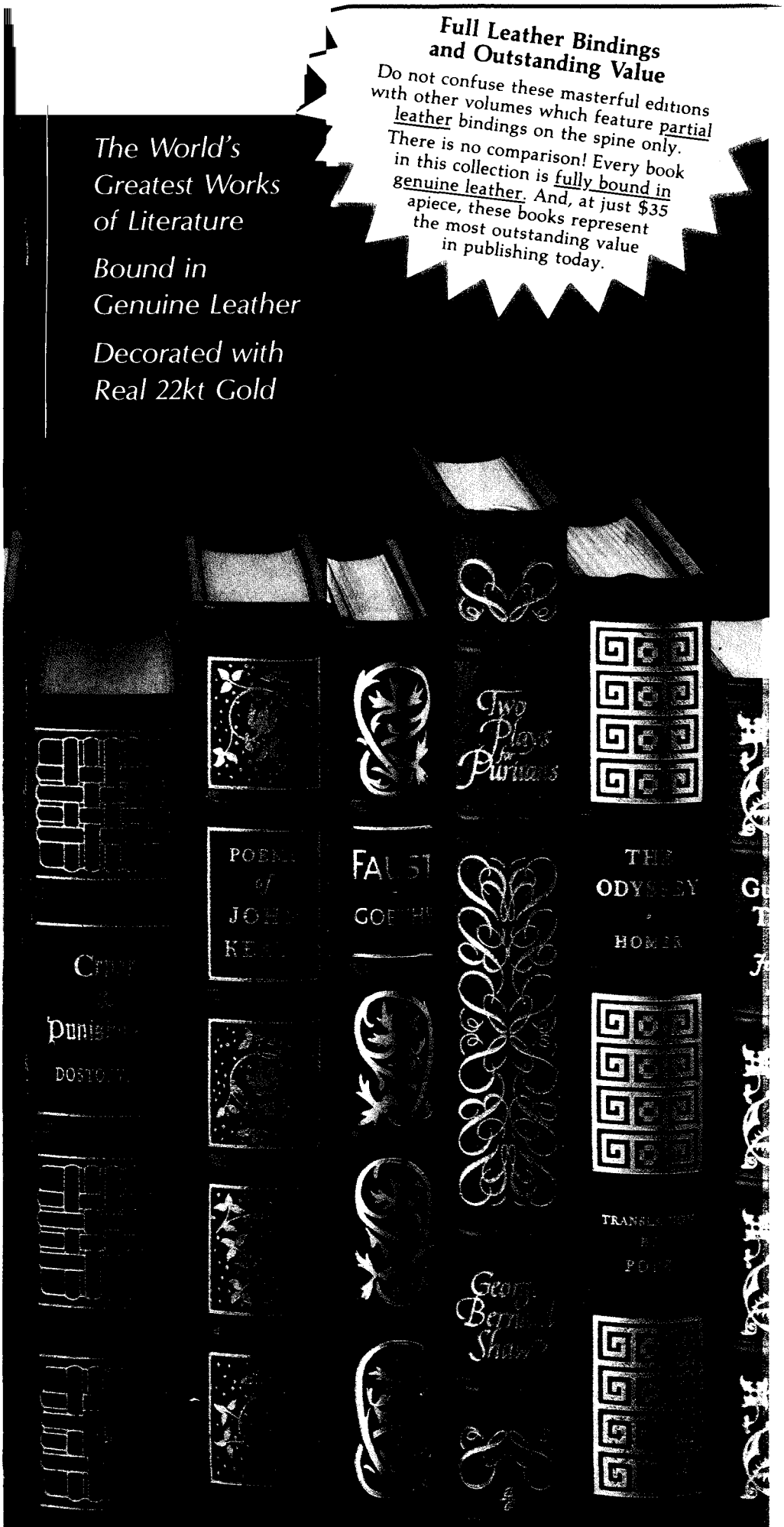

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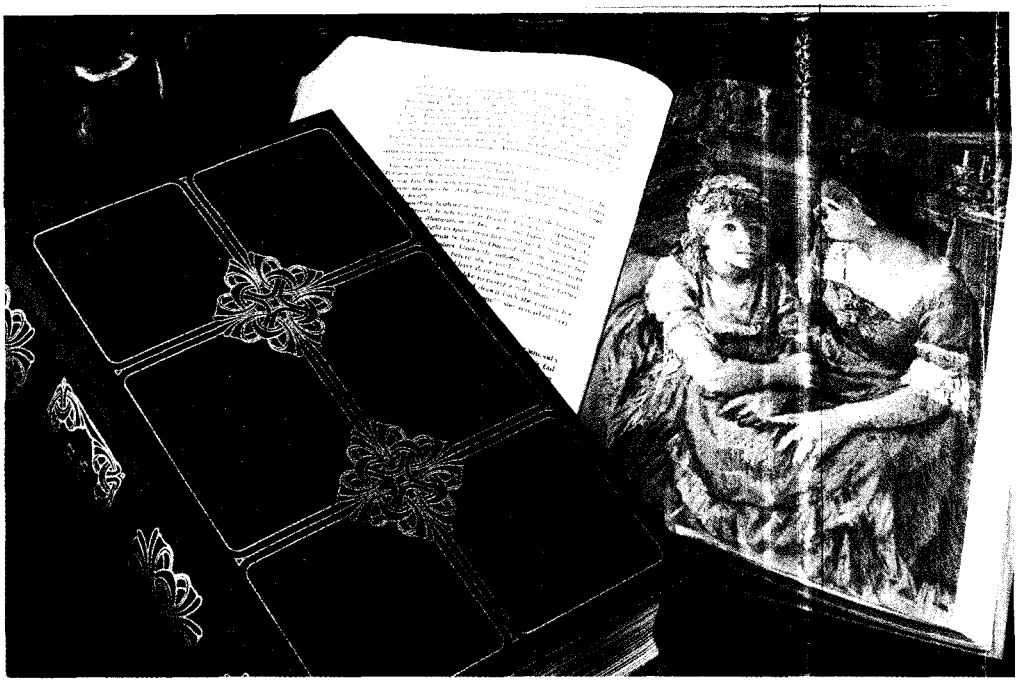

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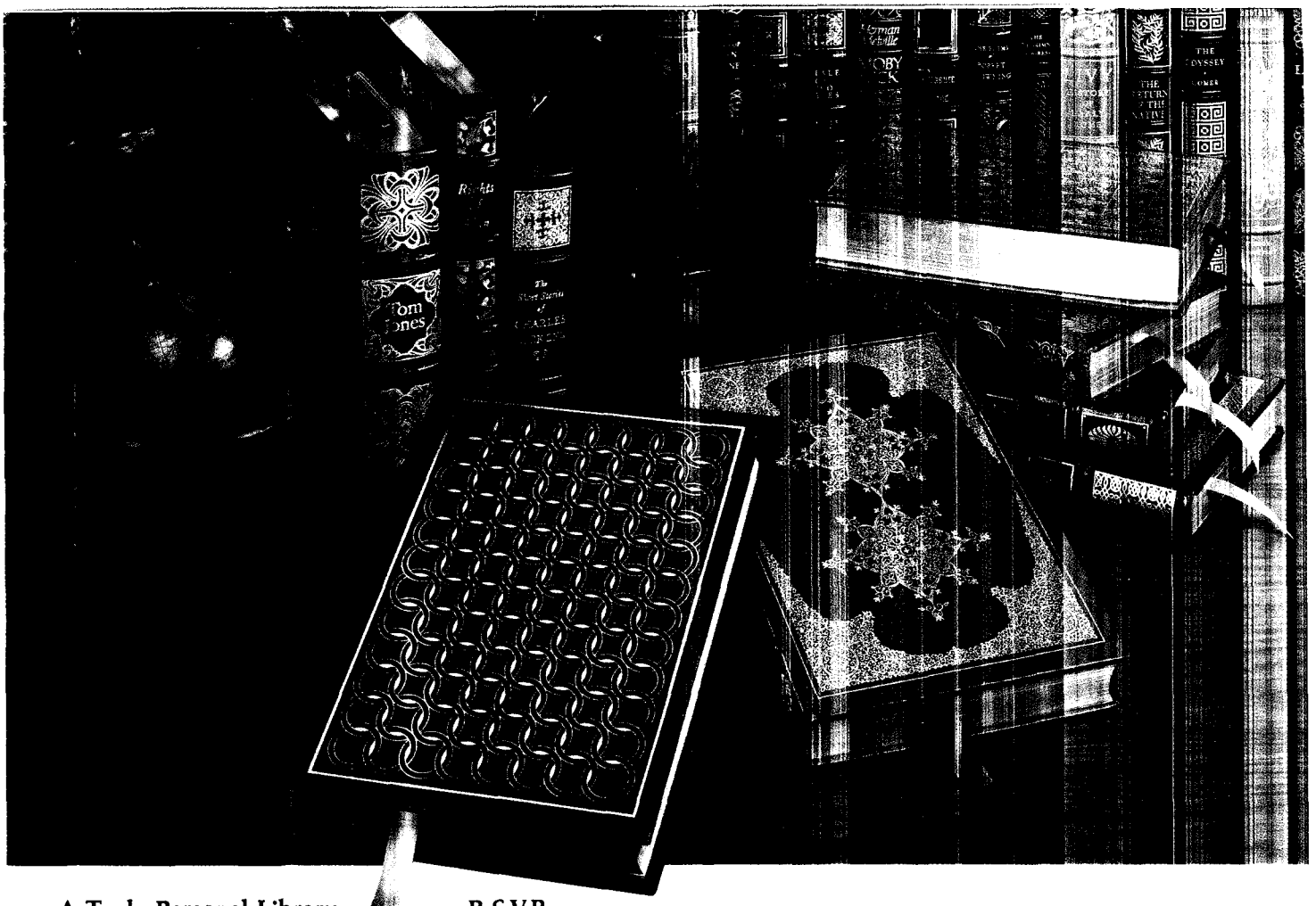

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SPOTLIGHTS

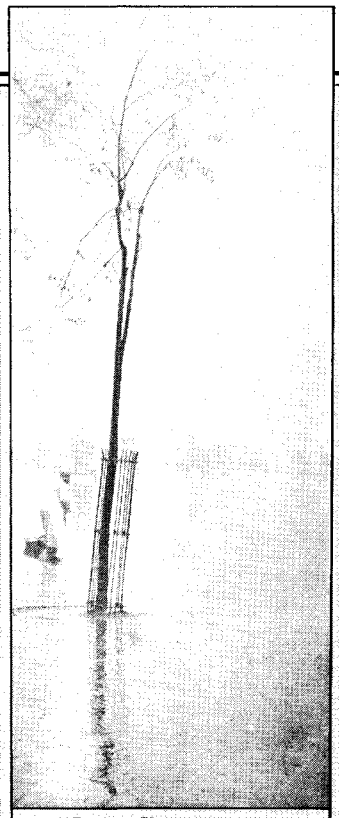
PHOTOGRAPHY
Founding Father

If he had never done anything else, **Alfred Stieglitz** would still have secured a niche for himself in the pantheon of modern art as an art dealer. In his cramped gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue, he presented Henri Matisse to U.S. viewers for the first time in 1908, Paul Cezanne in his first U.S. showing there in 1910, and Pablo Picasso's U.S. debut in 1911. But of course Stieglitz (1864-1946) was himself an artistic pioneer, a founding father of twentieth century photography. Through his writings in *Camera Notes* and *Camera Work*, his group of photographers, the Photo-Secession, and above all his own photographs, he championed his medium as a "genuine" art. Our current infatuation with photography is to some degree a measure of his success.

From February 8 to May 8, Washington's National Gallery will host *Alfred Stieglitz*, the first retrospective of his photographs in almost 50 years. The show (which travels to New York's Metropolitan Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago) will include over 170 photographs, tracing his work from the late nineteenth century until 1935. Stieglitz was a trailblazer technically (he was among the first to take pictures in rain and snow, and at night) and artistically (he explored photography's expressive and abstract potential), and this show amply demonstrates his pivotal role.

One of the Greatest

One photographer who was deeply influenced by Stieglitz was **Minor White** (1908-1976). White's starting point was the Stieglitz theory of equivalents developed in the early 1920s, which stated, "My cloud photographs are *equivalents* of my most profound life experience, my basic philosophy of life." For White as for Stieglitz, a photograph could be a record of an emotion that had nothing to do with the object photographed. But White was no mere disciple and he went on to make his own mark, pushing farther, insisting on the symbolic and spiritual qualities of photography. (His interest in the transcendental was fueled by a study of Zen, the *I Ching*, and the Gurdjieff movement.) He also gained renown through his *sequences* — juxtapositions of apparently unrelated photos — and his writings in *Aperture*, a magazine he co-founded in 1952. Art critic Meyer Shapiro praised his "inspired and loving perception," and Ansel Adams called him "one of the greatest of photographers."



"Spring Showers, 1901" by Stieglitz.

Sherrill Milnes as Henry VIII.

OPERA
Rediscovering Henry

In the 62 years since his death, Camille Saint-Saens has been remembered for his ability as an organist (Franz Liszt, albeit a friend, described him as the finest in the world), his symphonic poems, a few of his concertos, his noted Third Symphony for organ and piano, and one opera, *Samson and Delilah*. Actually, Saint-Saens composed twelve operas, but most were discarded by critics as insubstantial. Within the past decade, however, another opera by Saint-Saens, the 1883 **Henry VIII**, has come to light and been reassessed. It describes the English king's break with Catherine of Aragon and his rejection of papal law because of an infatuation with Anne Boleyn, whom he later comes to believe unfaithful. Romantic in its charged action and its sweeping melodies, *Henry VIII* recreates the pomp of the Tudor Court, which Saint-Saens so admired.

This month, the first American professional performances of *Henry VIII* will be given by the San Diego Opera. Featuring noted baritone Sherill Milnes as Henry, soprano Christina Deutekom as Queen Catherine, mezzo-soprano Brenda Boozer as Anne Boleyn, and tenor Jacque Trussel as Don Gomez, the Spanish Ambassador, *Henry VIII* will be under the direction of Opera General Director Tito Capobianco. Capobianco enjoys taking chances on innovations: he brought attention to the San Diego Opera in 1980 when he staged *Die Fledermaus* casting Beverly Sills and Dame Joan Sutherland together for the first time. The production is slated to be videotaped live, with plans for subsequent television airings in the fall. (February 12, 15, 18, 20.)

PERFORMANCE
Laurie Anderson's "United States" Quartet

It's hard to nail **Laurie Anderson** down. She's a visual artist who's had her work exhibited at the Venice Biennale, a writer who's published poetry and prose, and a classical violinist and composer. She has even released a pop single, "O Superman," that shot to number one on the British charts. Around 1974, Anderson began attracting attention by fusing her talents in performances that blended words and images, music and gestures. Such mixed-media recitals were not new — they were traceable to Dadaist experiments of the 1910s and 1920s, were rediscovered during the "happenings" of the 1960s, and were nurtured as "performance art" in the pluralism and artistic cross-breeding of the 1970s. But Laurie Anderson's collages of monologues, visual set pieces, electronic sound, slides, and songs— her witty interplay of words and moves, light and shadow, violins and voices — became the state of performance art. When the first two parts of her *United States* quartet were premiered in 1979 and 1980 in New York, they met with overwhelming critical reaction: *The New York Times* called her "a powerful creator and powerful performer" and *The Washington Post* said she was "a visionary innovator of the highest order."

The entire *United States* quartet will be performed for the first time as a unit at the Brooklyn Academy of Music February 3-10. These performances also mark the American premieres of Parts III and IV. The quartet comments on contemporary U.S. culture and puts together pieces of American life, politics, work, and love. Anderson will of course be the main performer, presenting her trademark melange. Purists may continue to ask, is it theater or conceptual art, music or poetry? But whatever you call what she does, Laurie Anderson is among the most exciting talents the American avant-garde has to offer.

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FILM

King Kline

Each season, the film industry propels a new actor or actress into the limelight. This winter's big discovery is Kevin Kline. Kline has already established a name for himself in the theater, first as a founding member of John Houseman's Acting Company and then on Broadway, where he won a Tony Award for his portrayal of a Hollywood slickster in *On the Twentieth Century* and another for his Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Kline made his movie debut just two months ago in Alan Pakula's film version of the William Styron novel *Sophie's Choice*, and he has already begun to garner impressive accolades for his role of Nathan Landau, Sophie's passionate, tormented lover.

Fresh on the heels of that acclaim, Kline stars in the screen version of **The Pirates of Penzance**. Joe Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival had a Broadway hit with its revival of the 1879 Gilbert and Sullivan operetta about a young man indentured to pirates, and the movie promises to be equally whimsical, especially with the return of almost all the leading players. Kline recreates his Pirate King—exuberant and big-hearted, he is more apt to swash his own buckles than anyone else's. He is joined by theater veterans Angela Lansbury and George Rose, and pop singers Linda Ronstadt and Rex Smith. (Opens February 18.)

Kevin Kline in *Pirates of Penzance*.

Italian Teamwork

Born to an immigrant laundry-worker in 1942, Martin Scorsese spent his early years in a tenement in New York's Little Italy. He was a weak child afflicted with pleurisy and asthma and he became a loner, avoiding the rough camaraderie of the neighborhood streets. Instead, he turned into a movie fan, and after studying film at NYU his hobby became his profession. From the first, his films depicted the seamy side of city life. Scorsese focused on the twisted, offbeat, urban character in movies like the 1973 *Mean Streets*, the 1976 *Taxi Driver*, and even the 1977 musical *New York, New York*. The actor who came to incarnate this character was Robert De Niro, like Scorsese an Italian-American from downtown New York. As a team, they clicked: De Niro's charged performance as a psychotic Vietnam veteran powered *Taxi Driver* to the International Grand Prize at Cannes, and the director's grim, murky mood piece *Raging Bull* showcased De Niro's Oscar-winning boxing role.

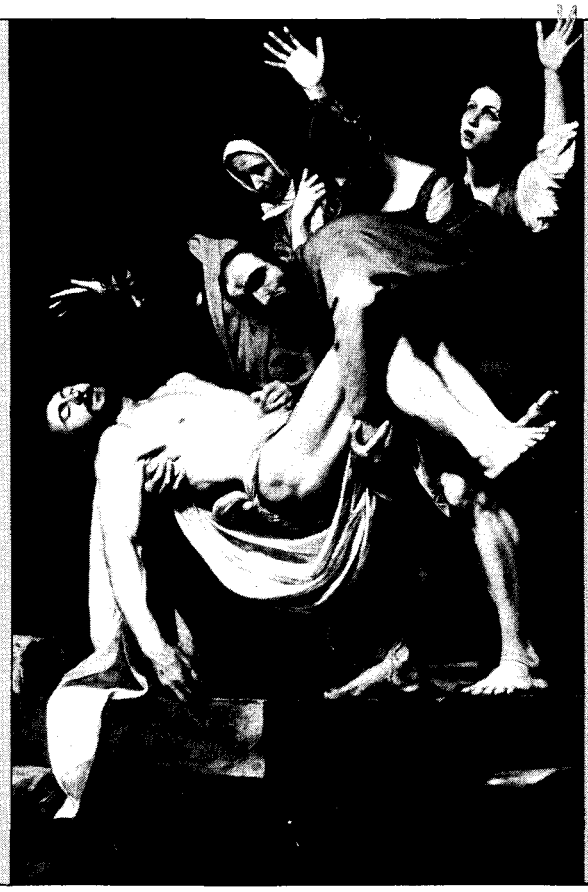
Their latest film together is **The King of Comedy**, in which De Niro plays a small-time stand-up comic obsessed with the dream of making it big. He becomes driven by the idea of appearing on a late-night talk show (like Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*), so driven that he goes to startling extremes. The host is played by Jerry Lewis, appearing in a dramatic role, which in itself is noteworthy. With the team of Scorsese and De Niro, *The King of Comedy* becomes one of the year's more eagerly awaited films. (Opens February 11.)

ART

The Vatican Collections: Monumental in Scope

In recent years a new cultural phenomenon has arisen — the blockbuster art exhibit. People are now as willing to line up around the block at the Metropolitan Museum as at Radio City Music Hall. The King Tut and Picasso exhibits both became mass-market fads, with accompanying souvenirs and paraphernalia from Tut trinkets to Picasso T-shirts.

Now comes **The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art**, the next exhibit to offer its tickets through Ticketron. Appearing at the Metropolitan Museum from February 26 through June 12, and traveling to the Art Institute of Chicago and the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco, *The Vatican Collections* is certain to be an impressive show. The Vatican has kept its fine art collection cloistered away for hundreds of years, and this is the first substantial exhibition of Vatican holdings ever to be sent abroad. It includes almost 250 works ranging from classical antiquity to the twentieth century. The scope is monumental, and the individual works are no less so, from the "Apollo Belvedere" and the "Farnese Cross" through Leonardo's "St. Jerome" and Caravaggio's "The Deposition", to works by Rouault, Derain, and Matisse. The Vatican's collections of classical sculpture and Renaissance art (spanning Fra Angelico, Raphael, and Bernini) are especially striking. The line is already starting to form.



"The Deposition" by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ON LOAN FROM THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

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The Ultimate Resource

I want to do honor here to two authors of recently published books who have a great deal in common—Corita Kent and Robert Muller. They have the courage, in an age remarkably devoid of open sentiment, to be unabashedly poetic about the possibilities of human growth and response. Others may assess the human future in equations and computerized statistics; Corita Kent and Robert Muller deal with splendid intangibles—what human beings are capable of doing once unshackled from self-imposed limitations, all of which have their origins not in biology or history, but in cramped notions of what a human being is capable of becoming.

Corita Kent speaks to these sensibilities in *Moments* (Beacon Press, $12.95), a book that seeks to ease the pain that comes not just from injury or injustice, but from separation—separation of people from one another, separation from visions and passions, separation from longings. She uses her art and her words to create a mood in which rekindling and recapture are possible. This sense of regeneration takes place when, suddenly, doors in the mind open out on new vistas and prospects. Her drawings and her poetic evocations are powerful springs behind these doors. Whatever the origins of her faith, her manifestations of it are joyously and robustly creative, and do not depend on authority or argument. She unerringly finds her way, in just a few words and splashes of color, to the universal aspects of mind and spirit. *Moments* is an attempt to connect us to the deepest feelings and responses of which we are capable. The finest and most rewarding moments in life come with a sharpening of the senses. Corita Kent's book is committed to that purpose.

Robert Muller displays the same evocative and unapologetic turn of mind in *New Genesis* (Doubleday, $14.95). At a time when engines of apocalyptic destruction are being wheeled into place, he sees new counterforces arising. The very instruments that have compressed the entire globe into a potential single battlefield have also enabled human beings over that same globe to recognize and act on their kinship. There is a vast power, he believes, in the realization by people everywhere that they themselves must be the proper custodians of their planet. Old facts of separation and conflict are losing their power to influence and terrify. Tribalism, which has dominated history until now, is giving way to a new sense of the whole and to an awareness of new possibilities that can come from common resolve. Robert Muller is both a philosopher and architect in translating this new awareness into recognizable designs for the building of a world community.

Robert Muller has been connected with the United Nations in a variety of high stations since its inception. No one has a keener understanding of its problems and weaknesses than he. Yet he can see the U.N.—just as he can see the world—in fullest perspective. "The dreams of peace, of world fraternity, and of the United Nations," he writes, "are all too often scoffed at and ignored as childish and hopeless fantasies. . . ." But those who content themselves only with criticism ignore the need that led to the United Nations, and the substantial means for raising it to the level where it can expunge the world anarchy that is its most lethal fuse. He perceives, as did Buckminster Fuller in *Critical Path* and Marilyn Ferguson in her *Aquarian Conspiracy*, a human response of vast dimensions to the unspeakable dangers rising so rapidly. "Beyond the turmoil, the divisions and perplexities of our time," he writes, "humanity is slowly finding the ways, limits and new codes of behavior which will encompass all races, nations, religions, and ideologies. The march of knowledge and intelligence will go on, uncovering a heretofore unknown reality which has existed all around us since the beginning of time. . . ."

Words such as these tend to be regarded by highly sophisticated and perhaps tired minds as quaint, but irrelevant, musings. Yet the historical record shows that the greatest changes in history have come about because of the way words put people into motion. Albert Einstein's science did not prevent him from expressing the belief that governments could be expected to give up their bounds only when enough people demanded it. Not long before he died, he wrote an open letter to his fellow scientists declaring that the sovereign nations had to be tamed, that order had to be brought into their relationships, and that the energy and power for accomplishing this purpose had to come from the people themselves.

Robert Muller, working from this premise, is not discouraged by the apparent remoteness of the prospect that a collective wisdom and conscience can assert itself in time to avert a pulverization of human society. He has written a book that can serve as an inventory not just of all the hazards to the human future, but of the sources of energy for overcoming them. **—N.C.**

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Richard Price: Graduation of a Working-Class Voice

In his new novel, "The Breaks," Price frees his protagonist from the stereotypes of family and background. In the process, he may have freed himself as a writer.

BY KAY BONETTI

Richard Price first tasted literary success in 1974 at the tender age of 24, when he published The Wanderers, *a gritty, almost surreal novel about Bronx housing-project teenagers growing up in the early 1960s. Two years later, his second novel,* Bloodbrothers, *explored much of the same urban turf, detailing a young man's struggle to resolve the conflicts of family loyalty and his future dreams. Both books were adapted for film. Price's third novel,* Ladies' Man, *published in 1978, was an exploration of a 30-year-old man's search for sexual and self-identity, set against the backdrop of Manhattan.*

Since 1975, he has written essays and articles for Esquire, Playboy, The New York Times, Rolling Stone, American Film *and* Village Voice. *His latest book,* The Breaks, *has just been published by Simon & Schuster.*

SR *In a recent* New York Times *article you related an experience that happened to you after you had left college. Would you mind telling that story?*

PRICE Well, actually I was doing construction work in the summer while I was in college. My background was the same as the guys I was working with, basically a lower middle-class, working-class background. Most of them were at least ten years older than me. But I felt I had to show them that I was just a regular guy, so I put on my heaviest Bronx accent, changing "this" and "them" to "dis" and "dem," thinking that they would accept me more if

ERIC LIEBOWITZ

I sounded like that. I just remember talking to this one guy who was about 50 years old and he just stared at me and finally cut me off and said, "You went to Cornell? That's amazing! My daughter goes to Bronx Community College and she speaks better English than you." It was sort of a life lesson.

SR *What was that life lesson?*

PRICE Well, what I was doing was showing my ignorance of the very value systems that I grew up with, that these guys were a part of. They value college education, they believe in the American Dream. They're the backbone of Middle America, and for me to return from college and talk like that was a slap in their faces.

SR *It strikes me that in your new work,* The Breaks, *we see the working-through of that lesson.*

PRICE Yes, there is a working-through. People aren't stymied by their backgrounds if they break through. When *The Wanderers* came out the *Village Voice* gave it a pretty good review, but the reviewer had one complaint. She said, "Well, this is really authentic, but there's something that bothers me—out of all these guys, didn't at least one of them go off to college and get an MFA? Ah, come on, Richie." I'm finally appreciating that. That was another way of saying, "My daughter went to Bronx Community," and the

ERIC LIEBOWITZ

Kay Bonetti is project director for the American Audio Prose Library, Columbia, Missouri.

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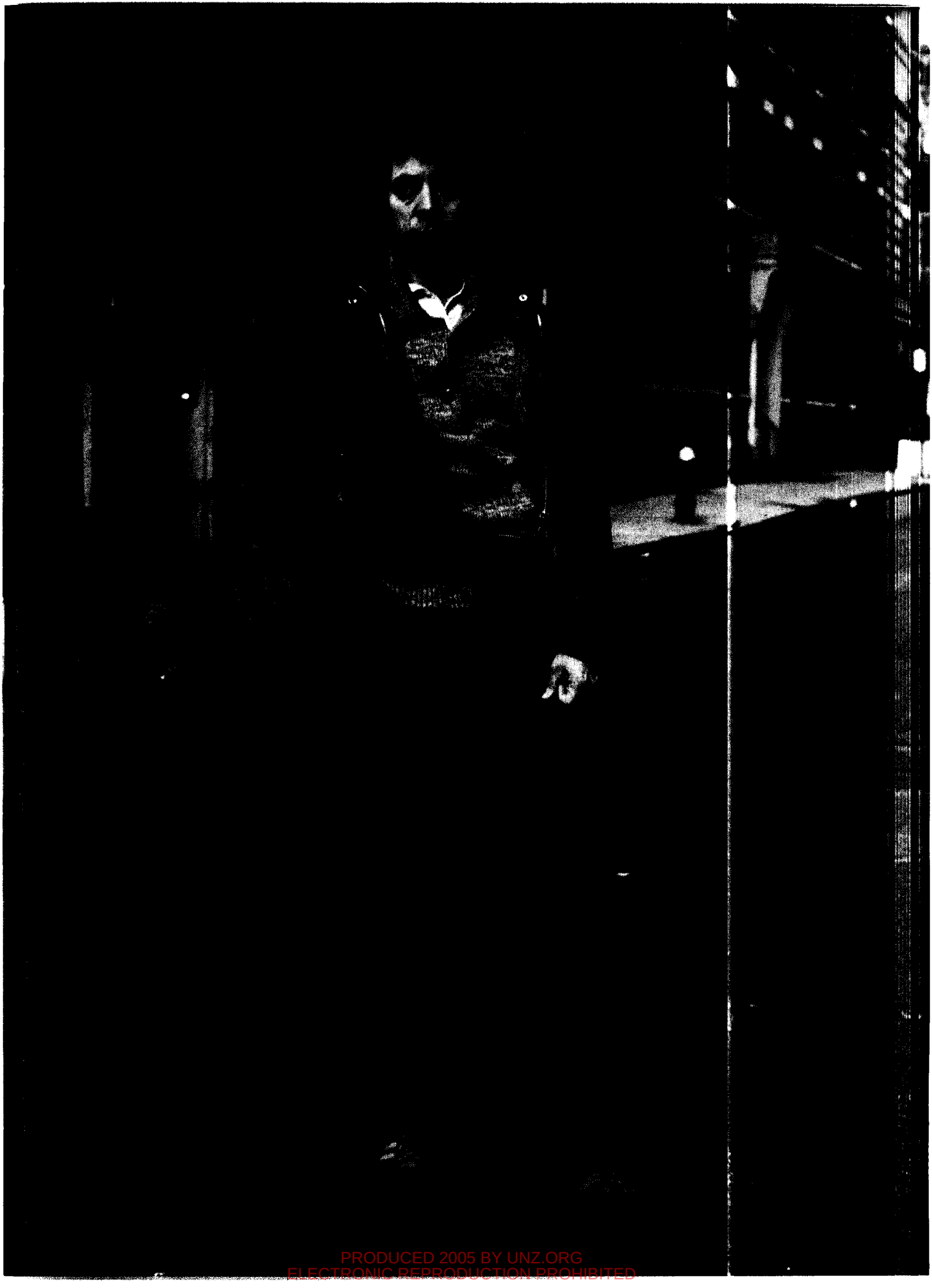

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On writing: "I just try to keep things microcosmic and hope the resonances. . .will go in all directions."

truth and humor of it are finally sinking in.

SR *Are you taking a more optimistic view of life?*

PRICE Well, there are shadings of liberation and optimism, but more than that, I feel that as I get older I have to be responsible for taking my characters to where I've been. I used a false identity in *Bloodbrothers*, but this kid in *The Breaks* is me. I always felt I had a problem in that I was smarter than any of my characters, and it was taking the easy way out. What I have done is upgrade their complexity and their capabilities.

SR *Would you say your writing is more autobiographical than that of other writers?*

PRICE Well, I feel that all writing is autobiographical, but I can only write about things that I feel I'm an authority on. I can't write about Viet Nam, I've never been there. My subject world is very small because I'm a stickler for absolute accuracy. I admire writers like Robert Stone who have a world vision, who can create an entire country as he did in *A Flag for Sunrise*. I just try to keep things microcosmic and hope the resonances and dynamics will go in all directions.

SR *What were your early literary influences?*

PRICE The two books that opened my eyes were *Last Exit to Brooklyn* by Hubert Selby, Jr., and *The Essential Lenny Bruce*, which is basically taped transcripts of his monologues.

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They worked in somewhat different ways to get me rolling. *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was the first book I read in which I heard the voice of the housing projects; and there was music in it and it was "literature." In public schools I'd learned a stodgy, conservative framework for what was considered literature. I felt that unless I could write like George Eliot, I was sunk. I needed to see something in print with the profanity and rhythms of *Last Exit to Brooklyn*; just to see it there, published. I must have read it fifteen times.

In the Lenny Bruce thing, the monologues, I found the dialogue, the pacing, the mannerisms, colloquialisms, and humor so much like my own. My sense of humor wasn't quite as developed, of course, but it seemed so *simpatico* to that whole tongue-clucking, shruggy, what-can-you-do type wildness. And it was in print! It made me realize how much I would love to write dialogue and capture the way that people I knew spoke. It's almost like being an archivist.

SR *How conscious are you of having a political stance in your fiction?*

PRICE I don't have a political stance in my fiction because I can't stand proselytizing of any kind. But I do think all art is political; any sort of vision of the way things are is a political statement. The books that make me think most about the human condition are those written about people, written with pure 360 degree compassion. If there's any political element in my books, it's that I want to create an awareness that certain people exist—working-class Bronx teenagers, construction workers, door-to-door salesmen. Let me just put them on paper so the reader can see them and decide who they are.

SR *There has been criticism that in American literature this working-class culture has been largely ignored. How do you account for that?*

PRICE Well, that's very simple if you look at the background of people who become writers. It's basically an upper middle-class occupation, so you tend to get a lot of suburban angst, like John Cheever. The brightest minds coming out of housing projects and slums will become engineers and doctors, not writers, because it's a luxury to take a chance on being an artist.

This reflects what gets written about. How can somebody from an upper middle-class background write about Indians? James Welch has to write about Indians. Claude Brown's going to have to write about Harlem, and for every Claude Brown, maybe a thousand black kids, if they don't succumb to the environment, will go on to be lawyers and doctors, not writers. In fact, when I testified before the House of Representatives about the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) budget cuts, this was one of my main points of contention. If there are no sources of income for young writers who aren't making money from their own work, the people who'll have to stop writing are the minorities and the poor, and you're going to have less and less of that influence showing up in literature. It creates a serious gap in what gets documented and remembered.

" 'Last Exit to Brooklyn' was the first book I read in which I heard the voice of the housing projects; and there was music in it, and it was 'literature'. "

SR *What strikes me as curious about the critical response to your work so far is the ignorance of the very socio-economic class you're writing about.*

PRICE Sure. If writers are predominantly upper middle-class, reviewers are too. I've felt a lot of people couldn't separate the housing project I was writing about from Spanish Harlem or Black Harlem, and it was as different from that as Scarsdale. In *The Wanderers* just about everybody's a virgin, nobody's a dropout, every father's employed, they listen to music—they're very sort-of straight, conservative, naive kids.

SR *You've spoken of writing as growth, and yet you have a keen sense of there being a line between writing as growth and allowing it to become self-indulgence.*

PRICE You have to keep changing. If you rush into writing something before you give yourself a chance to learn something new, you start repeating yourself. That's why writer's block is such an agonizing thing—it's more like a "life block." It's not just "I can't write," it's more like "I don't know anything, anymore."

The worst thing is when a writer gets into competition with himself, keeping one eye on the clock and one eye on his life. He's not allowing himself to learn anything. It gets to the point where something will happen and instead of saying, "Gee, that was amazing" you say, "Gee, that was an amazing scene." You go to a park and it's an autumn day, the gold, the indigos—and you're a photographer—and you look at the trees and smell the air and say "Ahh." Or you can say, "My God, this is great, let me go get my camera."

I think you're short-changing yourself when you get hung up on when the next Epiphany's coming. It's a watched pot.

SR *What is the proper relationship between who you are and what you do?*

PRICE Talk is cheap. I'm one of those guys who runs back to get his camera. I guess the most important thing is to be surrounded by people who have been around you long enough to be unimpressed by the fact that you are a writer. If someone cares about you enough and spends time with you, the pizzazz wears off.

SR *What kind of routine do you have?*

PRICE Right now, I have an office in Times Square and I get up, go in, work and go home. I very much need

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those "Father Knows Best" days. I need structure. Also I teach, because I need to feel like I'm interacting with people.

SR *Are you an effective teacher?*

PRICE Yes, I think so. I take writing very seriously and since my students are at the graduate level, that means they've chosen to put two years into creative writing and they ought to take it seriously, too.

Ninety-five per cent of student writing is garbage, not because of a lack of talent, but because they're not saying anything. They're getting off on wordsmithing. I spend most of my time trying to line up their guns with their targets.

SR *You've said that writing, above all else, must be celebration. What do you mean?*

PRICE Simply that the whole notion of creating a work of art, no matter how despairing, is giving life to something. I think that's always an affirmative act, and to that extent all books are celebratory.

SR *I thought it was interesting that you used that expression, "writing is celebration," in referring to* Last Exit to Brooklyn.

PRICE A lot of people read *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and get hung up on the exoticism — the transvestites, junkies, killers, nymphomaniacs. You can just see them clapping their hands over their mouths. But, the point is, if Selby can create something so vivid, so real, that it evokes that strong a reaction, he's creating life.

SR *Did you study writing in school?*

PRICE Well, sure. I got an MFA degree from Columbia and I also went to Stanford for a term. But first, I got a degree in labor relations from Cornell. Even though in high school I loved writing, I felt like I had to do something more blue-chip in terms of my own aspirations. The fact that I ultimately went into writing derives from that initial choice to stay away from artsy pursuits. Someone who wants to be a writer shouldn't major in writing. If a kid wants to go to college and be a writer someday, he should be a history major or a psychology major, not an English major. The worst thing in the world is to read Henry James and then go home and try to write your own stuff. You need to learn about the world and stay away from writing and writers until you've got enough of a sense of yourself and a sense of independence to go into a workshop environment and work purely on writing.

SR *So, what made you decide to take that step and "study" writing?*

PRICE Like Pete Keller (in *The Breaks*), I got on the waiting list at Columbia Law School and didn't get in. I applied to writing programs, but I also applied to education schools, business schools and the advertising program at the Syracuse University journalism school. Then I was planning to go to Harvard for educational administration, but it just didn't feel right. Finally my father said, "I can't stand hearing about this anymore; go to Columbia; get it out of your system. If nothing happens, you'll be 23 with your fine arts degree and then you can go to law school."

It had never dawned on me that I could do just what I wanted to do. I felt I had this Manifest Destiny—to be a lawyer, live in the 'burbs, wear a suit. And in fact, if *The Wanderers* had not been published, I'm not sure I would have stayed with it. That's one of the things I think about — would I have had the stamina and determination?

SR *Did the publication of* The Wanderers *make you realize a sense of writing as vocation?*

PRICE Well, no, because when it was published I was still a writing student and I didn't have any appreciation of how hard it was to get a first novel published. It felt to me like I had written this really terrific term paper that somebody was printing. *The Wanderers* actually came out of an assignment for a writing class. It was my turn to read, so I started writing about growing up in the Bronx. It took me almost halfway through *Bloodbrothers* to realize that I had a career.

SR *To what extent has trying to live up to the success of your first book helped or hindered you?*

PRICE I think it's hindered me more than helped me. What I'm realizing is that becoming a better writer doesn't necessarily mean you'll write a book as compelling and touching as the first thing you wrote. I think I'm twice the writer I was when I wrote *The Wanderers*, but there's a time and place, a subject, an emotionality, a combination, the least of which is your talent, that will just hit people a certain way. Sometimes you can't ever repeat that.

When *Ladies' Man* came out, I thought it was a real separation from my first two books in terms of style, consciousness, what I was trying to tackle. Half the reviews said that after the fantastic start of *The Wanderers* and *Bloodbrothers*, he gives us this crap. The other half said that after the comic book garbage of *The Wanderers* and *Bloodbrothers*, he's finally a serious writer. It's up to me if it's going to bother me or not.

SR *Do you read your critics?*

PRICE I've got big scrapbooks at home. I've got everything. They're either saying "good dog" or "bad dog."

It's hard when you write a book and someone hates it and the headline reads "PRICE'S NOVEL HOLLOW." It's not just you that's looking at it. If it's a Chicago paper, everybody in Chicago is going "bad dog, bad dog." That's why writers are so nuts. I don't feel that what I do is any more valuable than something someone makes with their hands. But, because of the nature of the work, the whole notion of selling something to the masses, we get a distorted vision of our importance. If somebody builds a house, it's not reviewed in *The New York Times* — "GEORGE THE CARPENTER'S FOURTH HOUSE HOLLOW" — but that stuff works on you.

SR *Obviously you feel there must be some central core of self-determination.*

PRICE Yes. It's like what Joyce Carol Oates once said at a reading: "A writer has to develop rhino skin. You have to have a sense of self; you have to develop tunnel vision." I think that's true strength. It might also be vanity, but I think that's what you have to do. You can't write to answer critics or you start writing for them. ■

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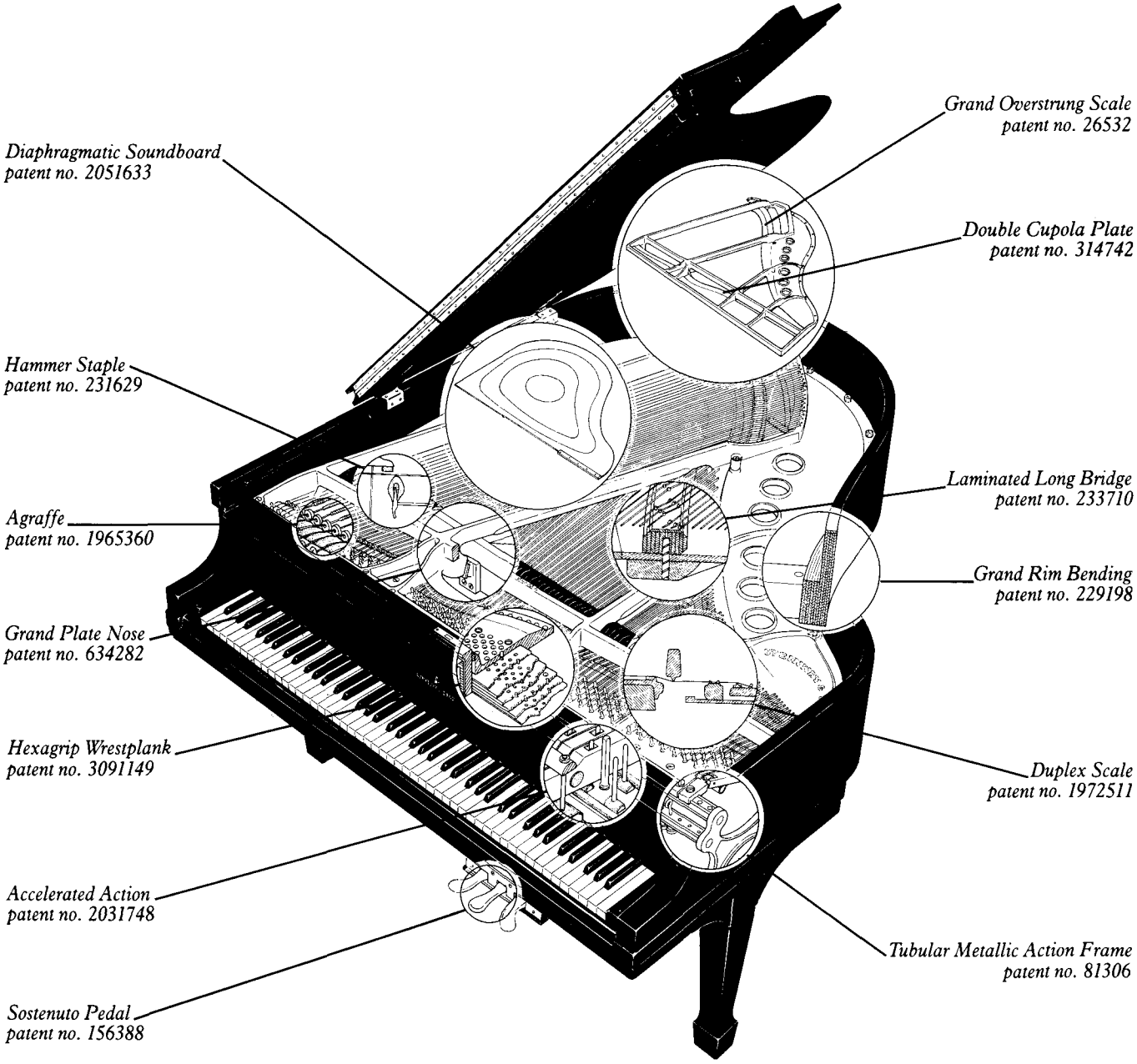

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Dancing Toward the Light

With help from the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped, Alvin Ailey and a group of dedicated dancers and teachers are bringing dance to the blind.

BY VALERIE BROOKS

When I was growing up in Texas in the Thirties," says choreographer Alvin Ailey, "itinerant, blind, black folk singers would regularly pass through my home town of Navasota. A child would lead them. They'd stay awhile and sing their songs and tell stories. I was so impressed by the beauty that came out of people who could not see—singers like Blind Lemon Jefferson and Sonny Boy Williamson. Theirs was a soul-gripping sound. It's because of them and the blind old women [I heard] singing in church, when my mother could drag me, that I want to teach blind and poorly sighted kids to dance. Maybe they will dance as those men and women could sing."

Ten children now have the chance. "It's so exciting. I like music. It's great to dance." The words tumble furiously from bubbly, curly-haired Maria Rosenfeld, her whole face bright with a smile. Her eyes beam from behind thick glasses as she stands in black leotard and pink tights in the huge, mirror-lined studio at the Alvin Ailey Dance Center. From the floor-to-ceiling windows there is a view of Shubert Alley and the theaters up and down Broadway. The presence of a visually handicapped child in surroundings designed for the physically blessed seems unlikely, yet for the next two years Maria and nine other children with similar disabilities, aged 12 to 18, will take classes here once a week.

"There was something else that moved me to find a way to work with kids like Maria," continues Ailey, who looks like a big, friendly bear. "At a party a long time ago, I saw blind people dancing—what a wonderful time they were having. I thought, 'What a good idea—to give kids who could hardly see, a means to explore space, the air, to get a feeling of self-worth, of their place in the world; to conquer the instrument of their own body'."

Only recently did he find a way to act on his idea, when in June he met with Stanley Plesent, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Ailey Theatre Foundation, and Jean Kennedy Smith, founder and national chairman of the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped. Smith says, "We are hoping that this will give impetus to similar projects all over the country. Just last year the Committee was able to help 300,000 of the disabled. Some people think the arts are pleasant, but not crucial. I don't agree: they should be an integral part of everyone's life. We're not giving these kids anything they are not entitled to by birth."

Ailey wants to devise a "Braille floor," so the blind can learn choreography. "I'll work with these kids and create a dance for them to perform at the end of the two years. The great blind soul singer, Stevie Wonder, is going to provide the music," he says. "They are so impressive with their self-possession and lack of fear."

Wendy Amos is the program coordinator and teacher. A former dancer and teacher at the Dance Theatre of Harlem who has been with the Ailey school for five years, Amos is a beautiful and affectionate instructor.

"We're going to start with improvisation," she says. "Do you know what improvisation means?" A hand shoots up.

"Eugene?"

"It means you make something up."

"That's good. Would you tell us, Mr. Ellison, what you think improvisation means."

Mr. Ellison is Monti Louis Ellison, a percussionist who has played for classes here for two years and who is a member of the rock group "Little Steven and the Disciples of Soul". He works with Amos and instructs the children in music throughout the program.

"Improvisation means to work off the story right at the moment. Use the basic material, then fly with it." He proves his mastery by creating strange and wonderful sounds with a striking array of instruments—most of them more common in the clubs of Rio de Janeiro or the streets of Dakar than in a dance studio.

"Now we'll try it," says Amos. "Let's sit down on the floor and imagine we're very, very tired, our shoulders are relaxed. Relax with your eyes closed." The group is quiet, small serene smiles playing across their lips.

"Your legs feel like noodles," in-

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JOHAN ELBERS

Jean Kennedy Smith and Alvin Ailey are helping the visually handicapped reach for a richer life.

terjects Ellison, "like wet noodles." They giggle. "*Very* wet noodles."

"In slow motion, lift your arms up to the ceiling. Reach. Slow. Slow. Right leg, stretch, leave it up there. Push your heel to the ceiling." There are moans, but eventually all the arms stretch high toward the bright red, green and yellow ceiling fixtures that criss-cross above them. It looks like fun and games, and it certainly is, but it is much more. Amos uses scientific exercises to loosen and strengthen the muscles for better coordination and dancing.

A lively imagination and energy fire her approach. Her background helps: she has studied at Manhattan's distinguished Dalton school, the Pratt Institute and the Sorbonne. Her physical training began at the Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Pilates Studio for Body Conditioning.

"The first blind student I had," says Amos, "was at the Dance Theatre of Harlem. The woman was in her forties and had been blind since birth. For several weeks, I had to literally move her from one position to the next. When we did steps coming across the floor, I would hold her around the waist until she got the confidence to go alone. Ten months later, her balance and coordination had improved, and so had the curvature of her spine."

The class continues: "We'll make up a story. Part of pretending is setting the atmosphere. What time of day should it be?"

Small, blonde Laura Colvin calls out, "Nighttime."

"What season?"

"Summer," answers pretty Dionne Ward, whose favorite composers are Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, although her classmates prefer disco.

"Last summer I didn't think I could sleep," Amos continues. "It was *so* hot. I threw my covers on the floor." Ellison shakes a tambourine. "I threw everything off." More tambourine. "Oh my, your fingers get so sticky-sweaty. So hot, you want a cold drink of water. Let's crawl around the floor, dream about the desert."

They slide around. Eugene clearly is getting very thirsty; he yells out, "Water."

Amos brings relief: "You are on the beach. Stretch out in the sunshine, feel the warmth, feel the pulsing of the water against your body."

Ellison helps again. With a Boston Red Sox keychain — "These instruments call for personal touches"—he plucks at the *berimba*, which looks like an archer's bow with a small gourd attached. "You bounce it off your belly and you get the insect jungle sound."

Amos also is assisted by Ailey company dancers Sarita Allen, Dianne Maroney and David McCauley and

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by the instructor of the children's section of the school, William Figeroa. Figeroa says, "I teach these kids just like I do those in my other classes. The only difference between them is that these handicapped kids are more enthusiastic."

Enthusiasm was the main criterion for their selection. Informal auditions were held at the Queens School for Career Development and the Jesse Isador Strauss School, P.S. 199. The teachers in charge were Susan McGrath at Queens and Marilyn Lambright at P.S. 199. "We learned of the possibility in October," says McGrath, a gentle woman who has worked with the blind for several years. "I talked it up quite a bit, so by the time the auditions came around in the middle of November, the kids were looking forward to it a great deal."

"I hoped and hoped to get picked," Maria Rosenfeld says. "For the audition there was a man on the stage playing a bongo drum. We had to walk eight times, jump eight times, dance a little, clap our hands. When I was picked I thought, 'I hope my ma lets me go'."

"I felt r[illegible] and clumsy," says Eugene C[illegible]. "When I touched my feet, I g[illegible]y right and left mixed up. I wanted to do it, though."

"When my kids finished the first class, they glowed," Lambright says. "After the second class, when they shopped for their dancing outfits, they were even more thrilled. They didn't say much, just radiated excitement." She looks as if nothing in the world could make her happier than their good time. "I told them it was a rare opportunity—new people, places, entertainment, and that it was a life story, something they would talk about all their lives. Few people realize what very narrow lives most handicapped kids live. The program is so enriching, it's unbelievable."

Quiet Julian Vargas, square bangs almost to his deep brown eyes, says shyly that he now practices jumping in the air at home—despite the neighbors. He also confesses that for him the drums are the best part of class. When Ellison explains each instrument, Julian hovers closest.

EDGAR STILLMAN

Teacher Wendy Amos, setting dreams free.

"This is the *berimba*. Warriors in the jungles of northern Brazil first used it to call the spirits for help before they went to war." He strums it rather like a harp. "Very haunting, isn't it?

"Almost every instrument played in Africa and the Caribbean first had a practical function: for instance, to send messages. For hunting, to imitate the mating call of the female leopard, they used this drum called the *quica*. Do any of you have cats? Imagine the noise they make when they want a boyfriend and multiply it eighty times." The children listen carefully. Allen, Maroney, Amos, McCauley, Figeroa all are comfortably close.

"Here's the *shekere*. It's a gourd encased in strings of multi-colored beads."

"What's a gourd?" asks Carleton Knowles, always eager for more information; either in spite of his total blindness or because of it, he is extremely mature and determined.

"It was for carrying water, to keep it cool. Someone figured out if they strung it with beads, they'd have an instrument." He shakes the pretty, round *shekere*. The beads sound like rain on a stream.

"But what's a gourd made of?" Carleton asks.

"A gourd grows," Ellison answers, smiling. "Only God knows what it's made of."

The stories begin again. They will improvise.

"Let's think about plants and seeds," says Amos. "Do you think you can pretend you're a seed?" Nods. "Okay, wherever I plant you, you have to stay."

Dancer Allen pretends to poke a hole in the soil, and instructor Figeroa crouches on the ground and begins to plant the children. The fantasy takes hold. "Now you are covered up and quite warm. The earth is dark and moist around you. It takes a few weeks of Mother Nature, who is Miss Amos, to help you grow." Smiling broadly, she pretends to sprinkle water. Ellison shakes the bells.

"Slowly you start to grow, very slowly." Drumming. "Look up to the sky because you are welcoming the sun. You can be a tree, or a plant or a flower. Feel the wind blow against you. Feel your branches grow and your petals unfold."

What is happening is almost too sweet, too good, too exciting. Ailey, Amos and the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped, have brought magic into the lives of those who never had reason to believe in it. As the class breaks up, Ellison goes into a fast, rocking samba; Allen, Maroney and Figeroa grab tambourines and bells, shake them and begin to dance. Rich, boisterous sounds fill the studio. Reluctantly, the children leave, led to the dressing rooms by Amos and McCauley, to change their clothes for the subway ride home.

"Who knows," says Ailey, "what the program will set off in these kids. My dream is that it will release their creativity so they can reach out and touch the world and know they are a part of life—and that it is an extraordinary life." ■

Valerie Brooks is a free-lance writer living in New York.

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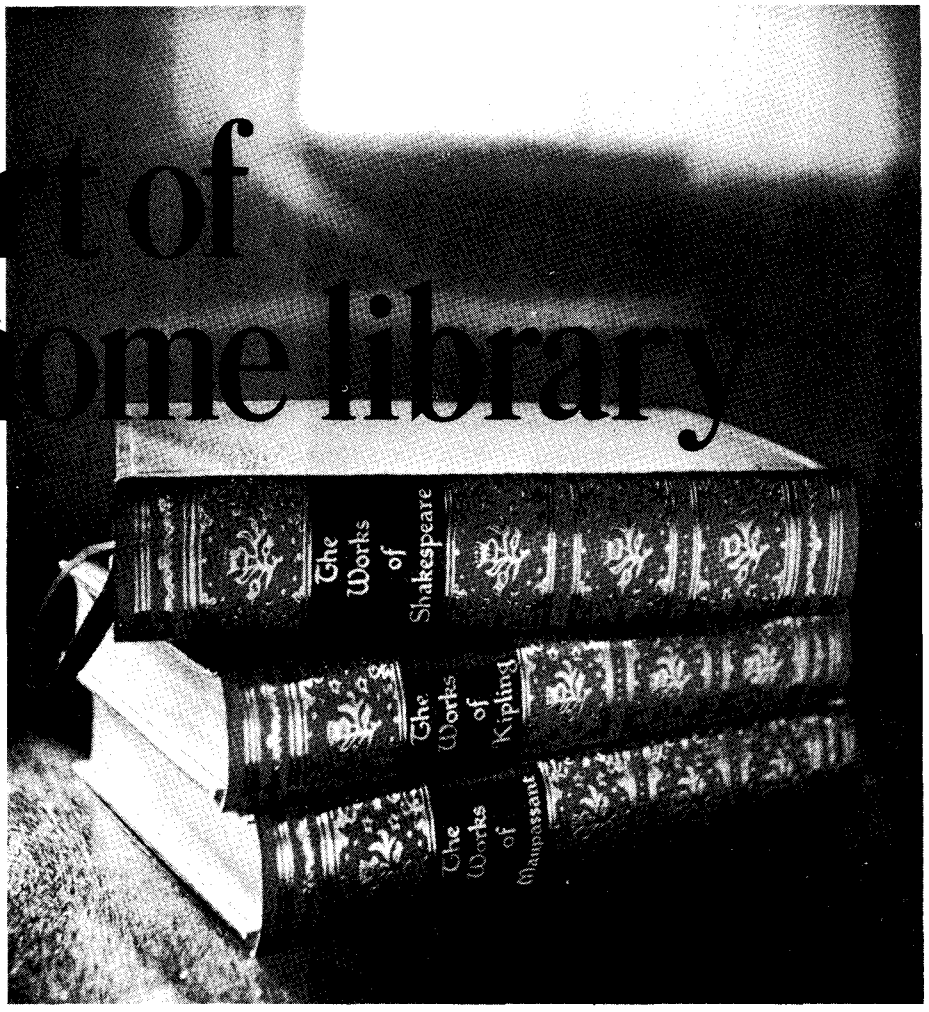

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Where a Visionary Opened His Eyes

In the wake of a recent touring retrospective exhibit, art critic Carter Ratcliff takes a fresh look at El Greco.

BY CARTER RATCLIFF

He signed his paintings Domenikos Theotokopolous, hardly a name anyone recognizes today. But for forty years in Toledo, Spain, from the late 1570s until his death in 1614, his art helped define the Spanish Church's desperate fight against the heresies of the Protestant Reformation. In his paintings, the world seems to burn with divine fire, aflame with his faith in the sacraments that ensure salvation. Today he is considered one of the greatest visionary artists of all time — known throughout history by his nickname: El Greco.

El Greco was a notable figure in Toledo's cultural and religious life, a painter-philosopher who enjoyed the patronage of the leading ecclesiastical powers. His luminous gray palette blended well with the austere spirituality of the Counter-Reformation, yet the light in his paintings recalls the atmosphere of a very different place, Venice, where El Greco first forged his artistic vision.

Venice was then a strong, independent merchant republic. Where merchants flourished, artists did likewise. It was in the midst of the grandeurs of Venice's "golden century" that El Greco entered the history of art. He was a native of Candia, the capital of Crete, and at the time of the painter's birth, 1541, Crete had belonged to Venice for more than three centuries. Candia was a place of high culture, an outpost of Byzantine art and learning. Those who see in El Greco's elongated figures the after-images of the madonnas who appear, artificial and unearthly, in the icons of medieval Byzantium are not completely mistaken. As the Spanish nickname by which we know him suggests, El Greco was profoundly Greek; it was not until late in his career that his signature switched from Greek to Roman characters. But Candia offered the hope only of provincial success. Sometime in his late twenties, El Greco abandoned the world of Eastern Christianity for Venice, the world of Titian and Tintoretto.

El Greco's Venetian period was very short — no more than three years, perhaps. And there seems to be little evidence to support the legend that El Greco worked in Titian's atelier. This makes it tempting to dismiss the Venetian El Greco altogether, but two or three points suggest otherwise. First, the silvery light of El Greco's Spanish paintings looks like a variant of the ambient glow we consider typically Venetian, the pictorial weather of Bellini, Georgione and, above all, Titian. Then there is the way Titian's light turns a bit harsh, a touch overwrought, in the art of his contemporary Tintoretto. El Greco called Tintoretto's *Crucifixion* of 1565 "the greatest painting that exists today in the world." The young artist appears to have learned from this prolific and sometimes hasty master that the serenities of Venetian high style have their agitated side, their invitations to excess. Tintoretto showed him that widely shared premises are subject to reinvention by audacious individuals.

To put the point in art historical terms, El Greco saw in his Venetian elder the potential of Mannerism. Though Mannerism has all the shortcomings of any scholarly label, it points with some accuracy to an astounding development in Italian art: a rejection of High Renaissance order for idiosyncratic styles given to extreme distortions of the human figure. With some artists, this became a refined play on formal possibilities, an almost dandified abstraction. In the work of Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino, and other Florentine painters, perspective lost its rationality. Anatomy turned aside from observed fact to breed impossibly elongated creatures, graceful and feverish by turns. These developments found echoes in the art of Tintoretto, who not only disturbed the tranquillity of Titianesque light but gave the solid, dignified figures of Venetian painting an uneasy, writhing grace they had never shown before. Much later and far from Venice, El Greco took Mannerism to extremes even Tintoretto had avoided. So, although El Greco's Venetian career was short, it provided him with the basis of a style that stands now as one of the most notable in the history of Western art.

In the light of Titian and Tintoretto's Venice, El Greco saw that painting need not serve merely as a vehicle

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CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

"The Holy Family with Mary Magdalene."

ATKINS MUSEUM, KANSAS CITY

"Mary Magdalene in Penitence."

to convey standard pieties to a conservative audience. It could be the means to a new vision, to a redefinition of the spiritual — and just such a redefinition occupied El Greco in Toledo. Without his Venetian interlude, short as it was, El Greco would never have found the stylistic audacity to match the religious fervors of sixteenth-century Spain. Naturally, then, Tintoretto haunts the mature El Greco. It was Tintoretto's genius that revealed to the young traveler from Crete what genius is — or even that there is such a thing. Of course, not every novice who spies the upper reaches of artistic possibility ascends that high. El Greco painted no particularly admirable canvases in Venice. Moving on to Rome for a stay of seven years, he assimilated much of Michelangelo's way with the figure — that is, he modified Tintoretto's Mannerism with Michelangelo's late Roman style. Yet patronage was intermittent, acceptance half-hearted. In the late 1570s, El Greco left Italy for Spain.

The Spanish king, Philip II, had begun to hand out commissions for the decoration of the Escorial, a palatial monument to his monarchy. El Greco had reason to believe that Philip would favor him, but his hopes were frustrated once again. Nearing 40, El Greco had still not established himself as a painter of much note.

Then acquaintances made in Rome led to important commissions in Toledo, and it was here that El Greco utterly transformed his vision of Tintoretto, of Michelangelo, of painting itself. It was here that he demonstrated that Mannerism need not be the eccentricity it is for Pontormo, nor the academic exercise that it became for Vasari and the rest of Michelangelo's follower-worshipers. El Greco reinvented the pictorial canon of the High Renaissance on terms unmistakably his own, yet he put this new style at the service of an exalted spiritual discipline — the struggle against the Protestant heresies, the Counter-Reformation, whose declaration of war was the Edict of Trent.

In Venice, El Greco acquired the seed of his style, which united the opposing themes of suffering and serenity in images of Christianity.

Taking up Old Testament attitudes, Protestants often turned into iconoclasts — literally, image-breakers — in the belief that painting and sculpture had no place in a house of worship. The Edict of Trent, its last articles published in 1563, insisted that art must be used to convey the messages of Scripture. Such icons as did appear in church, the edict

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stressed, must be of an irreproachably elevated nature. Artists were to present visual sermons on the mercies of the saints, the holiness of the Virgin Mary, and the sacrament of penance — all targets of Protestant attack.

No issue was more important than penance. The Catholic Church insisted on penance as a vehicle of God's grace. Thus El Greco, abiding by the Edict of Trent, devoted at least five paintings to the penitent Mary Magdalene, the harlot redeemed by Christ. Yet even in his faithfulness, he expressed a personal vision: in one of his versions of *The Holy Family*, he substituted the Magdalene for St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary. This was unheard of in earlier periods, and audacious even at the height of the Counter-Reformation. Nor does this Mary Magdalene simply stand as an emblem for a point of doctrine. She embraces the Virgin, bringing her tormented face close to the serene countenance of the Mother of God.

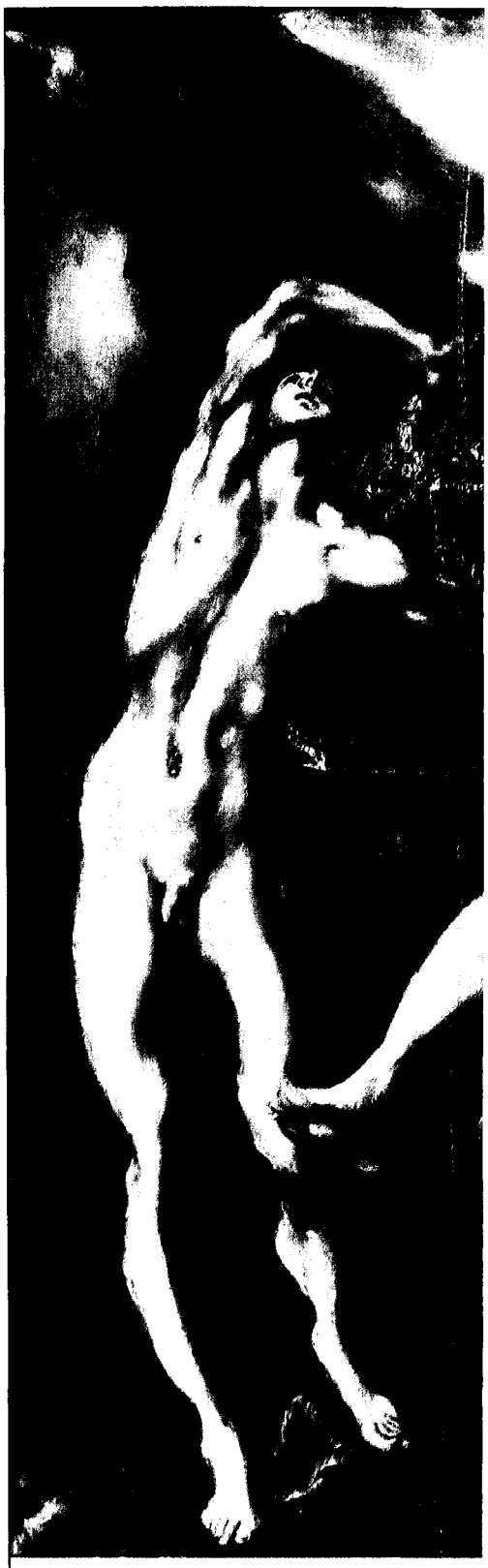
El Greco's figures are called flamelike, and with good reason. Flesh in his paintings looks translucent, insubstantial, yet El Greco's saints and madonnas, martyrs and rhapsodic priests are all the more intensely present for that. Their bodies are the emblems of souls drawn inexorably toward heaven. El Greco's art burns with the sincerity of his faith. In his world, even the forms of rocks tend upward, in the manner of fire.

To express one's faith with images of radiant bodies is to create problems for oneself as a painter. If the flesh is luminous, how is El Greco to account for such ordinary phenomena as sunlight and shadow? Gravity and even horizon lines turn problematic. The Renaissance devised systems of perspective to set light and space, and all the rest of observable reality, in rational order. El Greco has no use for these devices. He advances the claims of a reason beyond rationality, claims exerted on the faithful. This is not a backsliding from Renaissance humanism so much as an attempt to absorb it and work beyond its worldliness to those states of the soul that transcend the mind's capacities. There is no primitivism, no medievalizing, in El Greco's art. He takes the Renaissance heritage into account only to draw the eye beyond it, to a realm where the three dimensions in all their familiarity give way to what might be called spiritual space.

Granted, there is a range in El Greco's style. Some of his images are more unearthly than others. His most sober portraits look, at first glance, quite responsible to ordinary fact. A portraitist of the soul, he nonetheless produced convincing likenesses of particular faces. Yet even these paintings do without the Renaissance machinery of coherent highlights and shadows. Anatomy compresses, then rarefies itself. Every detail, from a distinctive set of eyebrows to a characteristic tilt of the chin, signifies an inward state. El Greco observes with extreme care, so that when he detaches his art from appearances he can direct it accurately toward the spiritual absolutes of his brand of Catholicism.

In the catalog of a recent exhibition, art historian Jonathan Brown pinpoints the source of the popular idea that El Greco painted the way he did because he had astigmatism. The culprit is a Spanish ophthalmologist named German Beritens, who published his theory in 1913. This "scientific" explanation has had a longer life than even Beritens had a right to expect, considering that it should have been smothered in its cradle. Our century goes to extremes, explaining art on the one hand with simplistic appeals to the mechanics of the eye or, on the other, claiming every artist from William Blake to El Greco to Paleolithic cavepainters as spiritual forebears of modern man. Brown and his colleagues demonstrate in great detail that El Greco's art was a response to the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century.

If we like, we can see the Counter-Reformation's struggle in El Greco's image of the pagan Laocoon grappling with a gigantic serpent. But museum shows are not, after all, inquisitions. No one will examine us here on our degree of sympathy with this artist's Magdalenes or his Christ on a cross set in a fantastic vision of Castile. Yet we should avoid the twentieth-century fallacy of seeing all art of every period as if it were a mirror of our own concerns, whether religious or secular, Catholic or otherwise. Those of Protestant background may sometimes find it impossible to read El Greco's saints and madonnas in any but the driest of formal terms. To see more deeply into these paintings one needs a sense of their historical moment — rather, of the way an ar-



"Laocoon": El Greco's fla

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SAMUEL H. KRESS COLLECTION, NATIONAL GALLERY

e figures stretch toward heaven, as if they are becoming less substantial as the fires of faith consume them.

tist's career culminated in a particular place, a certain sixteenth-century city. It was Toledo that provided El Greco with the social, theological, and political grounds on which to build his mature style.

Yet there is no School of Toledo of which El Greco was the leader. In spirit — and he was above all an artist of the spirit — El Greco belongs to Venice, the worldly capital of a flourishing republic, where he learned what it is to be an artist. It was in Venice that he discovered Titian and Tintoretto, his necessary rivals, against whose sensuous warmth he defined the paradox of his art — its fever of austerity, its icy fire. ■

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Wagner on TV: An Industrialized "Ring"

PBS presents French director Patrice Chereau's controversial version of "The Ring of the Nibelung."

BY MATTHEW GUREWITSCH

On January 17, the Public Broadcasting Service began one of the most ambitious series of its history. In eight evenings of prime airtime spread over the next few months, Richard Wagner's epic tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelung* beams into 2 to 3 million American households. Whether Wagner would have approved on principle is hard to guess. He was very choosy about his showcases; when in 1876 he first presented the world with his statement of the cosmic situation, it was at a new theater, the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth, designed to his own exacting and futuristic requirements. No existing house would do. On the other hand, Wagner was a revolutionary whose musical dramas aspired to alter forever the state of human consciousness. As evangelicals of all stripes have discovered, there is no more efficient means for broadcasting the gospel to the multitudes than television.

Whether Wagner would have approved the PBS *Ring* on artistic grounds is a second question. The series *did* originate in Bayreuth, still the shrine of the flourishing Wagner cult and dedicated exclusively to the Master's own works. But this *Ring,* first seen as the "Centenary" *Ring* of 1976 and videotaped live in 1979 and 1980, broke radically with both tradition and fashion. The directorial conceits of French enfant terrible Patrice Chereau rang through the decorum of the Festspielhaus like a war cry. The show sparked the kind of impassioned controversy that raged around Wagner throughout his life, so it may be peculiarly fitting that Chereau's idiosyncratic, studiously iconoclastic vision will afford millions of viewers their first acquaintance with this monument to nineteenth-century thought and art. Wagner's sun will have set the day his creations have lost their power to inflame, inspire, polarize.

What happens in the *Ring*? The mighty saga is not to be crammed into a nutshell. Still, in brief:

Das Rheingold (The Gold of the Rhine): Alberich, of the subterranean race of the Nibelungs, is spurned by the siren-like Rhinemaidens, renounces love, and thus gains the power to fashion the magic Gold of the Rhine they guard into a ring that will give its wearer world dominion. Wotan, the chief of the Gods, wrests the Ring from him by trickery but loses it to the Giants Fasolt and Fafner as he satisfies his debt for their construction of Valhalla, his airborne abode. Alberich lays his curse on the Ring, calling down destruction on all who shall ever possess it until it returns to his own hand.

Die Walkure (The Valkyrie): Wotan's twins by a mortal, Siegmund and Sieglinde, separated at birth, find each other in misery and misfortune—Sieglinde is married to the untender Hunding—and are consumed by incestuous ardor. Wotan gives in against his heart to the moral outrage of his wife, Fricka, guardian of marriage, and commands his Valkyrie daughter Brunnhilde to turn the impending battle between Siegmund and Hunding in favor of the wronged husband. She vainly disobeys, is stripped of her divinity and is left asleep on a rock, a prize for the first comer. She persuades her still-loving father to surround her with a magic fire inpenetrable to any but the greatest of heroes.

Siegfried: The young hero, son of the incestuous lovers, is orphaned at birth and brought up by the scheming, sniveling Nibelung Mime, Alberich's brother, who hopes to make the boy his instrument for seizing world dominion. Siegfried breaks free from his foster father; slays Fafner, who has turned himself into a dragon, the better to hoard his tainted treasure; unsuspectingly takes the ring; and discovers Brunnhilde, his predestined bride.

Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods): Brunnhilde sends Siegfried into the world to yet greater exploits. There he falls under the power of the wicked Hagen, Alberich's son by a mortal, who woos him alway from Brunnhilde with magic potions and then conspires with her to destroy her faithless husband. When Siegfried is dead and the plot uncovered, she tosses the Ring back into the Rhine and joins him on his funeral pyre, to light a fire that consumes the earth and the heavens.

How did Chereau manage to drop his bombshells? Wagner has been no more exempt, maybe less, than any other composer or playwright from the caprices of stage fashion. After the murky dreamscapes of the 1950s and 1960s had become increasingly encrusted with eccentricities, the pendulum was swinging back towards more "literal" representation, and jaded international audiences had some reason to believe they had seen everything.

Having noticed that although the *Ring* purports to concern itself with Norse gods and heroes, it is a product of the nineteenth century, Chereau concocted a visual collage in which

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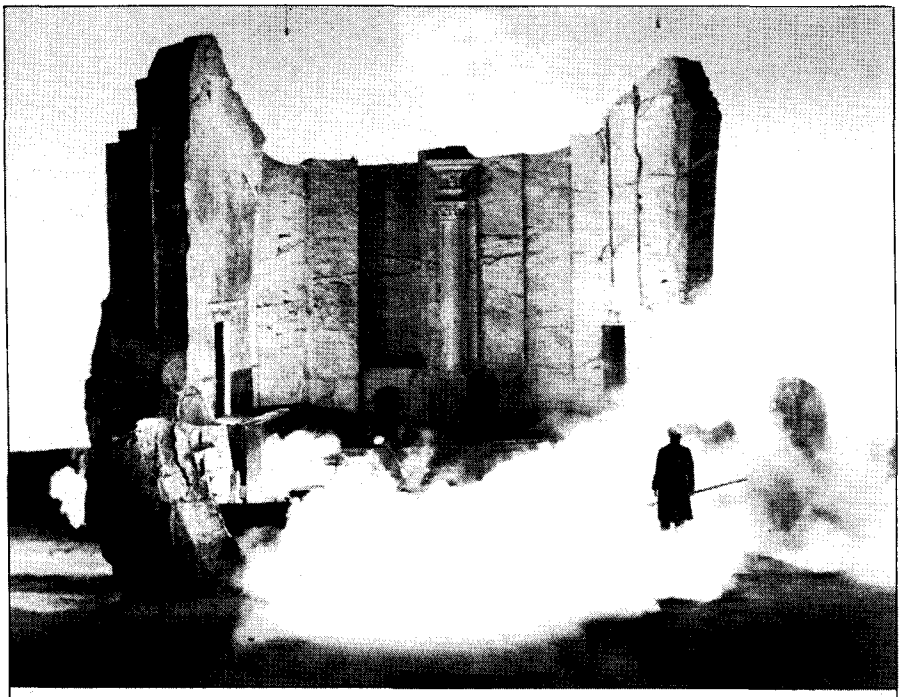

A fiery scene from *Die Walkure.*

scattered stock heroic images jarred with the trappings of nineteenth-century industrialism. This concept was not in itself overwhelmingly original. George Bernard Shaw's insouciant commentary *The Perfect Wagnerite*, published on the threshold of the twentieth century, already bandied about vaguely Marxist ideas; a spoken-word staging of the libretti in Munich in the 1960s portrayed the gods as figureheads (like the Krupps) of institutionalized corporate rapacity; and in the movies, Luchino Visconti's glittering dance of death, *The Damned*, played out against the nightmare of the Third Reich, took explicit cues from Wagner. Nor is this association between mythology and the imagery of rising modern technology far-fetched: the translation of the Gold into a hydroelectric plant makes considerable sense given the economics of energy in the later twentieth century. Chereau's shock tactics shot Wagner's myth down from the air of psychological theory to play itself out in the grubby arena of power politics.

In widely circulated production photographs, Chereau's colossal Giants, his toy Dragon, board rooms, factories and tenements look eerily suggestive and often compelling. Indeed, after the cloudy *Rings* of recent decades, Chereau's with its wealth of visual detail may have been the first suitable for television. Whether his pictures work in action is a matter home viewers will judge for themselves. The musical verdicts, however, can already be pronounced. Philips has released a complete, 16-disc *Ring* (6769 074), digitally recorded in the same live performances videotaped for the telecasts. (Originally offered only as a set, the four operas are now also being sold individually.)

The central musical intelligence is that of conductor Pierre Boulez, who in the nature of things does not have so free a hand as Chereau, but displays no less a sense of freshness. His is a high-energy, propulsive reading of gleaming tonal splendor and tight-wound rhythms, glorious in the variety of its dynamic profile. The instrumental textures achieve a transparency altogether astonishing, given the density of Wagner's orchestral writing. Yet this "lightness" is not purchased at the expense of mass and gravity. In an essay included with the *Ring* package, Boulez criticizes the empty rhetoric of dotted rhythms and the vacuity of the famous set pieces. Nevertheless, his vibrant accounts of the Ride of the Valkyries and Siegfried's Rhine Journey give no hint that he questions their musical worth. The gushing swirl of the water music that recommences when the Rhinemaidens have had their fill of taunting the misshapen dwarf Alberich in the opening scene of *Rheingold* is one of the early hints of the conductor's winged and sensuous leadership. The inexorable waves of sonic power when the Wanderer approaches in *Siegfried* are an example of his ability to unleash titanic forces. The initial chords of *Gotterdammerung* cry out with an anguish as gorgeous as it is searing.

The cast overall is less thrilling. That the breed of great Wagnerians is extinct, though not beyond hope of revival, is a cliche the facts bear out. The Wotan, Donald McIntyre, an indifferent *Heldenbariton* given to barking, conveys little subtlety, poetry or love in his declamations. As his mortal son Siegmund, Peter Hofmann displays surprising ardor and mellifluity despite his lack of genuine *Heldentenor* equipment. Jeannine Altmeyer sings Sieglinde and reveals a glowing instrument of heroic dimensions, but rhythmic bite is missing, and her generous outpourings of sound have yet to find the true contour of her phrases. The part of Brunnhilde is in the trust of that synthetic dramatic soprano from Wales, Gwyneth Jones. She performs her familiar routine of meting out copious and often strident tone to fill her lines, and has moments of fiery brilliance, but none of spontaneity or intuitive justness. Manfred Jung as Siegfried has the requisite stamina to compete with his rested heroine even after the rigors of the first two acts of Siegfried, but never the requisite graceful bloom.

Below the very top ranks, however, there is first-class work. The unequal Nibelung brothers, grasping Alberich and cringing Mime, come vividly to life in portrayals by bass Hermann Becht and tenor Helmut Pampuch. Basses Matti Salminen and Fritz Hubner do as well by Giants Fasolt and Fafner. Salminen reappears imposingly as Hunding, Sieglinde's husband; Hubner makes an awesome return as the brooding killer Hagen. As Fricka, Wotan's wife who stands for law, mezzo-soprano Hanna Schwarz enters into the spirit of her oddly Italianate music with the right pathos and flair. The finely tuned trio of Rhinemaidens (Norma Sharp, Ilse Gramatzki, Marga Schiml) soars with a lovely buoyancy. With the exception of Ortrun Wenkel, whose portrayal of the primal creature Erda does not measure up, the supporting cast takes its place beside the best of a vocally richer era. ■

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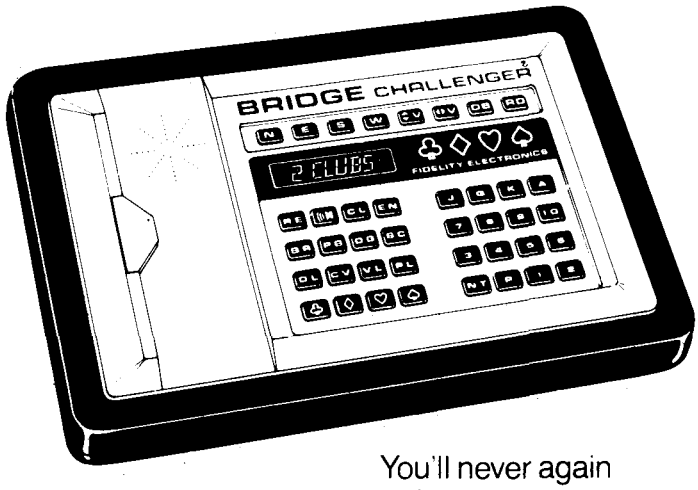

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The Dark Riddle of Jorge Luis Borges

In a recent interview in New Orleans, the enigmatic South American spoke of life, literature and dreams.

BY MARK CHILDRESS AND CHARLES C. McNAIR, JR.

At 83, Jorge Luis Borges stands in the center of a labyrinth. His poems, essays, and stories revolutionized South American literature, though his longest works are cryptic, highly compressed tales a few pages in length. Ficciones, Labyrinths, Dr. Brodie's Report, The Book of Sand—*these collections bonded a curious European perspective to the dark myths and ways of his native Argentina. The writers of his continent found a voice and a global audience both by imitating him and following his critical opinions, yet Borges remains, as he prefers, a "dark riddle" to the world beyond Buenos Aires. He has won nearly every prize in Latin American letters, but never the Nobel Prize, for which he's been nominated nineteen times. He no longer hopes to win.*

Born in the last year of the last century, blinded since the 1950s by a congenital disease, Borges has compressed his personal life to a still point. Enigmatic dreams invigorate and consume him. He spends his days in a simple Buenos Aires flat, receiving friends, working steadily, revisiting the works of writers he loved first: Kipling, Twain, Stevenson, Poe. He is, he says, "infested with literature."

Mark Childress is Southerners editor of **Southern Living** magazine, and has just finished his first novel, **Jacko.** Charles C. McNair, Jr., is a free-lance writer based in Mobile, Alabama, who is working on a novel, **Boys Will Cry Wolf.**

To illustrate nearly any point, he will lean forward, his blue-veiled eyes eagerly scanning, netting from his vast memory the exact verse or phrase he needs.

Occasionally, he steps out of his maze. On a recent trip to New Orleans, between lectures on aesthetics and the notion of meaning, Borges delighted in the "waves and waves of jazz" in the streets and clubs. Maria Kodama, a young Argentine scholar who reads to him and aids his travel, welcomed us into a suite at the Fairmont Hotel. Borges sat in brilliant sunlight by an open window. He softly sang three verses of "St. James Infirmary" from memory; his musical cadence was as precise as the English of his conversation.

> ***"Shakespeare's letting you down all the time. A very uneven writer. . . .You have a very fine line, and then you have, well, rhetoric."***

SR *Did you dream last night, Sr. Borges?*

BORGES I dream every night. I dream before I go to sleep, and I dream after waking up. When I begin to say meaningless words, I'm seeing impossible things. I remember that a dream gave me a story. I had a very confused, a very tangled dream. And the only thing I remembered was this: "I sell you Shakespeare's memory." And I wrote a story about that (*"La Memoria de Shakespeare"*). What a fine name Shakespeare is, yes?

But he was quite bad, don't you think so? A man who wrote "England, that demi-paradise." Sounds like a bad joke, no? I mean, Shakespeare's letting you down all the time. A very uneven writer. He's not. . .dependable. You have a very fine line, and then you have, well, rhetoric.

SR *Do you like to attend his plays?*

BORGES I like reading drama, not seeing it. That is a great part of my life, reading. I do my best to keep on reading. I keep on buying books, and living with them, but I can't read them, of course.

A book is atmosphere, no? I am ringed in with books. I went blind reading verses, and the whole thing came as a very slow twilight. Very slow. Not a—let's say—a particularly pathetic moment. People became faceless, the books had no illustrations, I couldn't see myself in the looking glass.

SR *Do you remember the last thing you saw?*

BORGES The last thing I saw was yellow, the yellow color, because the

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first two colors to disappear were black and red. People think that blind people live in the dark. No. The first color they lose is black. I'm yearning for the black and red. I wish I could see scarlet.

And now I live in the center of a kind of luminous greyish or bluish or greenish mist. But always luminous.

My father went blind also, my English grandmother died blind, my English great-grandfather died blind. I know that I am the fourth blind generation. I knew what lay in store for me.

SR *Do you read Braille?*

BORGES No, and what a pity. That would have changed my whole life. And now I'm too old. Too old for my hands.

SR *You said once you wished you had never left your father's library, where you spent your time as a child. . . .*

BORGES Well, as a matter of fact, I haven't. I'm still there. And here. I keep on reading the same books I read as a boy. Every time I read them they change. And they're changing me, of course.

At home, I haven't got a single book of mine, nor a single book written about me. I hardly know what I have written. I read other and better writers. If I reread my own stuff, I might be disheartened. I want to go on writing. I don't want to be discouraged.

SR *How do you write now?*

BORGES I keep on dreaming, scheming, planning all the time. People come, I dictate to them. It's the only thing I can do. I work in a very scattered way. I have no method. A haphazard way. Everything about me is haphazard.

I do my best to write in a simple style. I do my best to use the simple words. I do my best to watch the dictionary. I think my writing is, on the surface, simple. I feel a kind of inner need, an urge to do it. And I live to satisfy that need, and it keeps on worrying me, and when I write it down, I don't worry about it.

SR *Have you ever satisfied that need?*

BORGES Well, no, so I keep on writing.

SR *What are you writing now?*

BORGES So many things. I have to live on to write ever so many books, to write a book on Swedenborg, and to write a book of poems, a book of short stories. Maria Kodama and I studied old English together, and now we're studying old Norse. Very interesting languages.

SR *What is your favorite language?*

BORGES I think I would choose between English and German, but maybe if I knew Icelandic I would choose Icelandic. I think Spanish is a rather clumsy language. For example, a verse from Kipling: "We have ridden the low moon out of the sky." You can't ride the moon out of the sky in Spanish. The language doesn't allow it. How lucky to you that you were born to English, no? This is a wonderful language.

SR *How does it feel to read an English translation of your work?*

BORGES The translators greatly better it.

SR *Why don't you compose in English?*

BORGES I respect English far too much. Who am I to meddle with English?

SR *Do you believe in inspiration?*

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BORGES Yes. I think that at least in my case, things begin by inspiration. Something. . .we call it the Holy Ghost, or the muse, or the great memory, or the subconscious. When I write poetry, I tend to think of something immediate, downright. My poetry is more intimate to me than my prose. Many people dislike my poetry and enjoy my prose, in my country.

In the case of prose, I have to concoct a story, a plot, create characters, that sort of thing. Then, when I have something given me, I try to sit back and proceed. I never let my personal opinions meddle with my work. Given a fable, a plot. . .let's see, shall this happen, say, at the turn of the twentieth century or, say, in some Arabian Nights kind of life, or shall it have just happened? Maybe I'm in Scotland or America, or Buenos Aires, or Montevideo. . . .

SR *You mentioned the subconscious. What do you think of psychology?*

BORGES Everybody's supposed to hate his father or his mother. My father thought it was a very futile science. I don't understand people who claim they've mastered psychology. I feel pity for them. To be so interested in themselves, in analyzing themselves. I hardly know myself. Nobody does.

I think we have lost a very important science, ethics. People admire lying. They admire cheating. They admire a man being a millionaire. The things that are important, really important, are the books a man reads, his feelings, his actions, while opinions are not. They come and go. I've been a nationalist, I've been a communist, a quiet anarchist.

SR *Do you mean that Argentina has lost its ethical conscience?*

BORGES Let's hope it's just a local phenomenon. My country is just a hopeless country. The only thing we have left is the fact that we *are* hopeless. Nobody expects anything. Graft, corruption. The kidnapping, people disappearing. We're going steadily downhill. Had we democracy, we would choose some fool or snob like Peron, and the present man is quite incompetent. Why should he be competent?

SR *How do you define ethics?*

BORGES I don't have to define them, they go way down. I mean, when I act, I know where I am, rightly or wrongly. Every time I act, I know whether I'm doing right or wrong. At least I think I do. It's a feeling, an inner feeling.

SR *Is this feeling religious, as well?*

BORGES I don't feel, I don't concern about that. See, I'm a happy agnostic, a rollicking agnostic. I suppose every day we're in heaven, we're in hell, we're all over, no? I feel something, maybe I hope something, but after all, those are private questions.

The one thing I have experienced is magic. Maybe I haven't experienced anything else. I remember Halley's comet. As a child. I thought it was part of the centenary festivities in Buenos Aires. The whole city lit up. I thought it was a kind of celestial fireworks. . . .

"See, I'm a happy agnostic, a rollicking agnostic. I suppose every day we're in heaven, we're in hell, we're all over, no? I feel something, but after all, those are private questions."

SR *Do you look forward to the return of the comet?*

BORGES No, no, not at all. No. If I could die right now, that would be the wise thing to do, no? Sitting here and talking to you, in New Orleans? What else can I do. A long sickbed? I'd rather die quickly.

SR *But you still have stories to write.*

BORGES Yes, but I suppose I've told my best stories. I'm 82. I have no future left, or some kind of dream future, perhaps the only possible future. My mother died at the ripe age of 99, and she stood in fear of being 100.

SR *When you turn 101, you'll see the next century.*

BORGES Oh, let's hope not. Don't be a pessimist.

SR *Won't you continue to live, through your work?*

BORGES Well, I won't be there. I'll be absent. I'll be in another world, and I don't care a jot about it. I think my work will find its way.

SR *Would you have wanted fame sooner for yourself?*

BORGES No, I don't enjoy it. I'm uncomfortable with it. As my father said, "I would like to be a wealthy, invisible man." I never go to cocktail parties, to meetings of any kind. . .shaking hands, the same hands, saying, "Pleased to meet you, sir," and that kind of stuff over and over again, meeting people, and I can't see their faces. It's awful, really. You have to smile, you have to be grateful.

SR *Then does travel intrude upon your writing?*

BORGES To the contrary. I am very grateful. I can feel countries. I haven't seen Egypt, but I've been there. I haven't seen Japan, but I went to Japan. That makes all the difference. I don't know whether it comes from the senses or perhaps from beyond the senses. And now to be here, to be in America, seems so unbelievable to me, so wonderful, different than being in Buenos Aires, such a drab town.

SR *When will you return to America?*

BORGES As soon as I can. I want to travel all over, and I also want to go home. That's a part of traveling.

I may be expected or feared at any moment. ■

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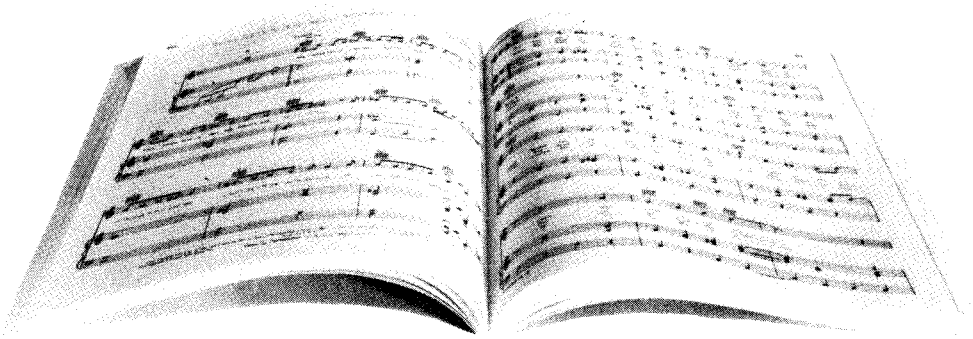

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LANGUAGE

Thomas H. Middleton

Senior Class

Last year, I saw a sign in Grand Central Station in New York saying, "SENIOR CITIZENS MUST BE AT LEAST 65 YEARS OF AGE AND PRESENT HIS OR HER MEDICARE CARD."

There's so much that's wrong with that sign that one's eyes get jumpy and one's hands begin to twitch in the indecision of wondering where to grab onto it to try to hold it down. Why anyone would write "senior citizens. . .must present his or her card" is a mystery. Apparently the writer had accepted the neo-feminist linguistic dictum that the use of the third-person masculine singular pronoun is a ploy contrived by masculine types to keep feminine types barefoot and pregnant, and this writer had automatically fallen into the feminist-approved "his or her" form, although the "his vs. his-or-her" problem is not even raised in the context of the phrase "senior citizens". "Senior citizens must present their cards" would have been impeccable.

An even greater mystery is that once that absurdity had been put into writing, no one, up to and including the printer, said, "That's ridiculous!" or more mildly, "I think I could phrase that better."

Then there is the question of what the sign actually means. Let's assume that what it means is, "In order to qualify for a senior citizen's railroad fare, you must prove that you are at least 65 years old by presenting your Medicare card." I'm not sure that that is what it means. I'm just guessing. Since the sign is in a railroad station, no other reading of it makes much sense to me.

But the sign says, "Senior citizens must be at least 65 years of age," and that sounds to me like the establishment of a basic requirement for senior citizenship. I don't know how I feel about the term "senior citizens" as a euphemism for "old people". Over the years, I've had a good deal of mail from people who tell me they hate the term "senior citizen" and would rather be called "old people". On the other hand, there are undoubtedly millions of people who haven't written to me and who are comforted by being senior instead of old. I can say, though, that there are at least two definitions of "senior citizen". The Grand Central sign would have it that 65 years is the minimum requirement for being a senior citizen. But last year my wife and I, on a journey from Los Angeles to Yosemite, had dinner in a Howard Johnson's restaurant in Fresno, and when the bill came, the waitress told us that we were in luck. We got a ten percent senior citizens' discount because we were over 55 — 55 years apparently being the minimum age requirement for senior citizenship at a Howard Johnson's. Since my wife and I look not a day older than, say, twenty-nine and a half, we're greatly puzzled as to how the waitress knew that we were actually in the senior citizen range, Howard Johnson's-wise.

In any case, it does seem clear that the people at Grand Central Station are being arbitrary in saying that senior citizens must be 65, while the people at Howard Johnson's set the magic number at 55.

Having touched on senior citizens — or old people, whichever you're comfortable with — I feel obliged to pass on to you one of the objections we, or they, have anent some of today's styles of address.

In last April's issue of *Saturday Review's* previous incarnation, I wrote about modern forms of address and, among other things, I said, "What really wrinkles my stuffed shirt these days is when I telephone a friend and get an answering service, and I say, 'Please tell Mr. Gilson that Tom Middleton called,' and the woman on the other end says, 'O.K., Tom.' She and I haven't even been introduced. That 'Tom' was for her to pass on to my buddy. . . . In the old days, she'd have said, 'Tom Middleton? I'll tell him, Mr. Middleton'."

I got a heavy response to that, almost all of it from people who feel as I do, and most of that from people who particularly resent young doctors, nurses, and medical and dental technicians, "some of them young enough to be my grandchildren," who call their seniors by their first names.

Imagine a woman, say, in her seventies, who has been seeing kindly old Doc Baldwin for most of her life, and old Doc Baldwin retires and turns the lady over to young Dr. Kildare, played by Ricky Schroder. Dr. Kildare is a whippersnapper fresh out of his internship. The lady says, "How do you do, Dr. Kildare?" How galling it must be when he replies, "Hello, Adelaide. Go in there and strip. Then put on this robe."

Several of my correspondents told me that when they've mentioned that they'd like to be called Mr. or Mrs., they've been told that the first name was not used in a spirit of disrespect, but in a spirit of informality and friendship — to make the addressee feel comfortable. That it has precisely the opposite effect shouldn't surprise anyone. Change is almost always jolting, and when you've become accustomed to certain forms over a period of sixty, seventy, eighty or more years, the jolt must be damned uncomfortable. It's hard to imagine an 80-year-old relishing being spoken to as a 6-year-old, by a 21-year-old. ■

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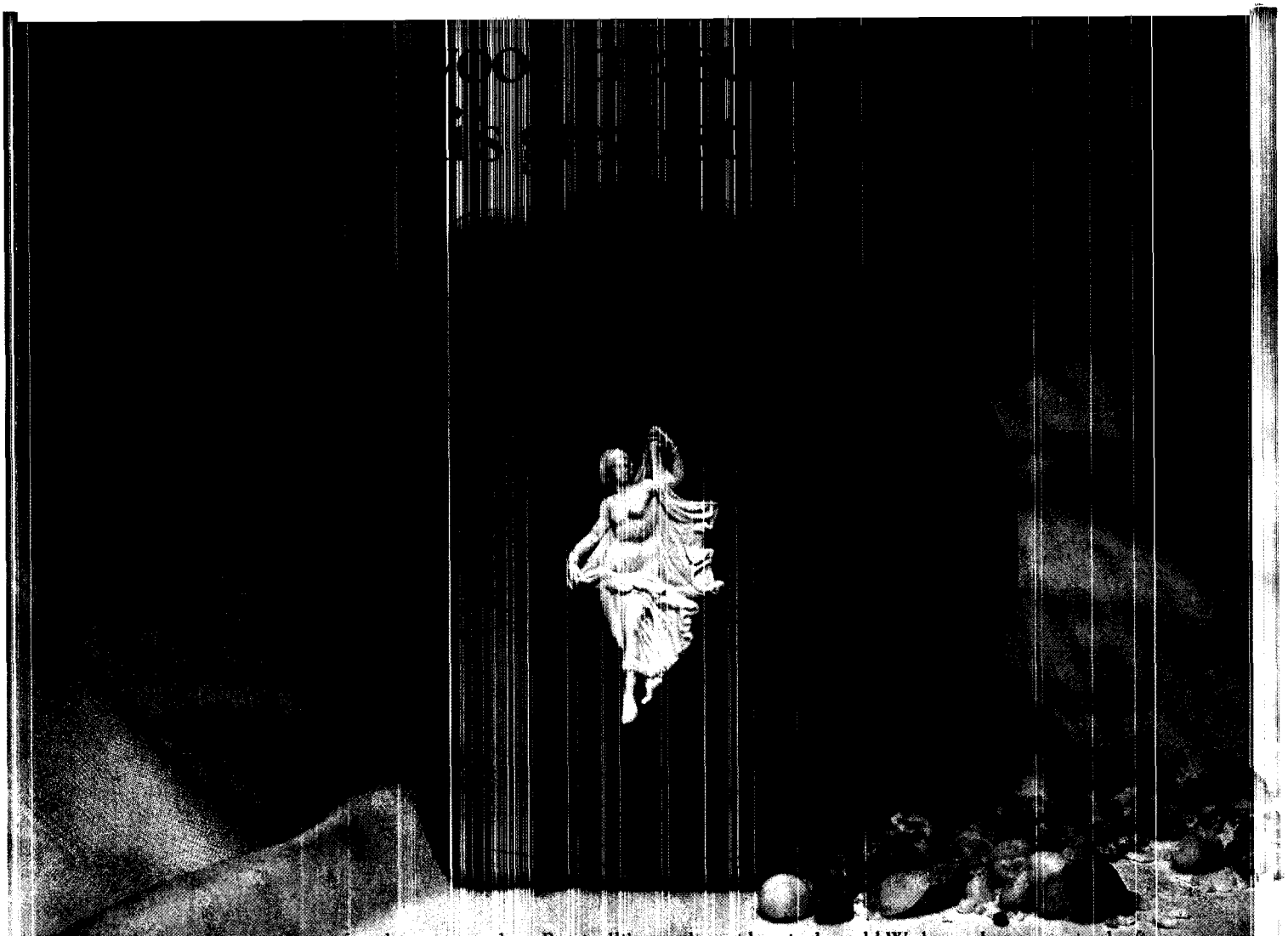

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Kate Nelligan in *Plenty*

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Stanley Kauffmann

Battling After the War

David Hare, the British dramatist, spoke at Cambridge University in March 1978, a month before his play **Plenty** opened in London. Said Hare: "I would suggest to you crudely that one of the reasons for the theater's possible authority, and for its recent general drift toward politics, is its unique suitability to displaying an age in which men's ideals and men's practice bear no relation to each other." *Plenty* then substantiated Hare's suggestion—and not "crudely" either. It was produced at the National, directed by the author with Kate Nelligan in the leading role, and both the play and the actress won praise and prizes. Four years later the play reached New York—at the Public Theater off Broadway, where I saw it—with Hare again directing, Nelligan again in the leading role, and the reception again warm. Now it has moved to Broadway.

A pleasant change: I can report that there's nothing puzzling about its reception. What a pungent, deft, engrossing play it is. If ultimately unsatisfying, still from the very first minutes it is highly intelligent and extraordinarily skillful. And from those first minutes *Plenty* clearly is about scarcity—scarcity of convictions in the midst of material plenty. I can't recall an age when, in Hare's terms above, men's ideals and men's practice *have* borne much relation to each other, but he has chosen an age in which the disparity between ideals and practice was particularly painful, and he has sliced to the center of it with a keen theatrical scalpel.

The protagonist is Susan Traherne, who at the age of seventeen was in British intelligence, serving in occupied France during the second World War. But we first meet her in 1962, in the first of the play's twelve scenes, after her mind and spirit have been battered by what has happened to her since the war. Thus Hare insures an acrid tone under Scene Two when we move back nineteen years to wartime France, where Susan is aiding a British agent who has just landed by parachute, a Susan who is clear-headed, courageously frightened, tensely radiant with the pleasure of being useful and used.

The rest of the play journeys ahead to 1962, dramatizing with bitterness and bitter wit how Susan came to be the disturbed, desperate woman that she is. The very last scene returns to France, Susan on a hilltop with a French farmer on the day of liberation in 1944. Joyfully she says, "There will be days and days and days like this," the last line of a play that has just blackly contradicted this last line.

Joyfully she says, "There will be days and days and days like this."

We have seen Susan move on a descending pilgrimage, through an affair with a former intelligence colleague which was apparently an attempt to keep in touch with a companion of the war days; through an affair with a Foreign Office attache that turns into a strained marriage; through a cool (and unsuccessful) arrangement with another man to father a child; and, possibly trying to sublimate frustration about this failure, through a sorry attempt with a Foreign Office chief to improve her husband's career. (The theme of the Foreign Office runs through the play like the ghost of former British power; also, the very idea of *service*, bureaucratic though it may be, has a grip on Susan's sensibility. The one heroic character in the play is a former British ambassador who resigns in disgust over British behavior at Suez in 1956 and dies soon after.)

Susan's own life, in advertising before marriage and in frustrating idleness afterward, unravels: brings her close to mental collapse. Because of her interference at the Foreign Office, her husband has been forced to leave the government; he has gone into insurance, is doing all right, is still devoted. But her postwar disappointments in herself and in the world finally boil up into quarrels between the pair. When she fulminates against the clutter and weight of their material posessions, their plenty, and turns on him, he fights back: "Which is the braver? To live as I do? Or never, ever to face life like you? . . . You claim to be protecting some personal ideal, always at a cost of almost infinite pain to everyone around you." The pain she causes, including her own, is very clear. Her lack of bravery is more complicated.

It's possible to see Susan's postwar disintegration as the penalty for facile idealism. It's also possible to see it as merely pettish, a childish demand that the world give her what she wants. (Hare counterpoises Susan with a friend named Alice whose life wobbles a bit at the start but who rights herself with socially contributory work.) And it's also possible to see Susan as a congenital high-speed neurotic whose condition was camouflaged by the excitement of war, then revealed by the humdrum

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dailiness of peace. For me, the truth about Susan lies in a different complexity, intrinsic and extrinsic, a complexity that combines a view of Susan herself with a view of the play that she inhabits, along with a view of its author.

One conflict, the intrinsic one, is between Susan's expectations of change in her country, because of the capacity for sacrifice shown in the war, and what actually did happen there after the war: the quick slouch back into pre-war materialism. But, in longer view—which is where dissatisfaction with the play begins—there is also a conflict within the overall entity of *Plenty*: a conflict between Hare's writing and structure, which are astringent and precise and incisively unsentimental, and the sentimental assumption that life *would* be exalted by the war experience. When has that ever happened after a war? (The fabric of the play implies that Hare himself shares Susan's expectation and disappointment. The one small indication to the contrary is the French farmer's behavior on the day of liberation; he dourly expects no more from the future than the drudgery he has known in the past.)

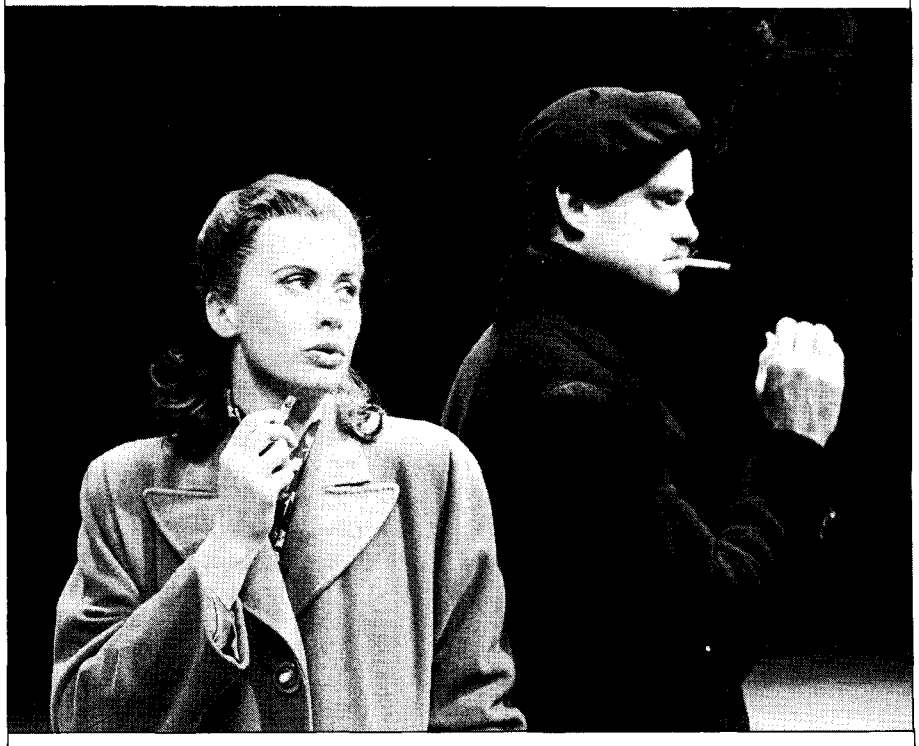
And then, in even longer view, there's a stranger conflict, caused by what is left out of the play. What is missing, the lack that keeps *Plenty* from being first-rate, is political belief. In his Cambridge talk, Hare mentioned the [British] theater's "recent general drift toward politics." Hare, like many of the best British dramatists of his generation, is a political radical; *Plenty* is a political play with the politics left out. The audience has to do some heavy inferring to perceive that the lost chance for change through radical politics is central in the morass of Susan's disappointments. This implication is left much too faint in the play. Clausewitz said that war is the continuation of politics by other means; *Plenty* would be even better than it is, would be complete, if it showed Susan realizing the reverse of Clausewitz's dictum—that peace is a means of continuing the politics that were heightened by war. Even if her political struggle had failed, it would have taken her collapse deeper than self-centeredness and would have put the thematic base of the play more closely in key with the acerbic dialogue.

I offer this as dramatic criticism, not as argument for politics that I don't support anyway. I'm not calling for propaganda, blatant or subtle. I suggest only that Hare, the radical artist, could have served his *art* better: not by giving us dogmatic answers but by embracing profounder questions. As *Plenty* is now, Susan's *agon* corrodes into neurosis. Too long after the play is over, we are left to deduce that Hare might have been saying: "Don't you see? If Susan had believed in social change through politics, had worked for it—whether or not the change had come about—she would have escaped the postwar letdown. Her life would have stayed at the 1944 pitch."

This is simply not dramatized for us. But what Hare does give us, he handles with feline grace, economy, hauteur. And he has directed with a discriminating eye and a musician's ear for inflection and pause. The setting by John Gunter is excellent: a huge, high room with shadowy murals—a hall in a Stately Home—within which various bits of mundane England are set and lighted.

Kate Nelligan is superb. I had seen her previously only in a silly suspense film, *Eye of the Needle,* and the *Therese Raquin* TV series shown on PBS, in which she was little more than luscious. Stature, fire, command, and irony—all these were wonderful surprises in her performance here. Futures are hard to calculate in our flaky theater/film world, but hers could be brilliant.

As her husband, Edward Herrmann does the best work of his that I have seen. His control of character, like his English accent, slips slightly, but he creates a man of understated strength and devotion. Ellen Parker as Alice, George Martin as the disgusted ambassador, Daniel Gerroll as the failed procreator, and Bill Moor as the Foreign Office chief all do much to keep the performance springy, tight, electric. In fact they are all so good that they leave us with a final paradox: their vivid acting, made possible by the play's pithy writing and lithe structure, helps reveal the play's basic thematic gap. ■



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The play's vivid acting reveals a basic thematic gap.

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Nancy Goldner

Paring Yields Essence, or Scraps

Walter Terry's articulate enthusiasm for dance graced the pages of the *Saturday Review* for many years, and might have still had he not died on October 4 after a brief illness. Officially, he was America's senior dance critic; unofficially, he was a roving good-will ambassador for dance. It was a role that came easily to his ebullient temperament. He liked to feel connected personally with as many nerve centers as possible. So it was with some irony that Walter, generous yet mindful of his senior spokesmanship, sometimes felt disconnected from his younger colleagues, myself included. That did *not* sit easily with him, and he did something about it whenever he got the chance.

One of the unexpected pleasures of my career was to have been able to provide Walter with an environment in which the generational gap could be chucked out the window. For the past couple of summers he'd come down to North Carolina, where I'd be directing a workshop for dance critics, and play "guest faculty." He'd give his lectures and so forth, but that, we'd discover, was the prelude. The main act was to sit around and talk, about our values, prejudices, and aspirations. These topics were always discussed in relation to dance and our jobs, but in the process Walter and the younger generation revealed a good deal about themselves. Walter's genuine interest—and perhaps, too, the heat of the Southern summer—would melt down our self-importance as critics and our self-consciousness in representing one generation or another.

Yet for all the fence-mending talk, he and we knew that he was special. Much of what we had read about, Walter knew first-hand. He was both contemporary and a link with the past, which made him a figure in his own right. Recently, a journalist who had attended one of those summer workshops wondered whether in thirty years we'd talk about Walter the way he talked of Ruth St. Denis and others who seem so removed from the dance we see today.

Time travels fast in dance life; a new generation is born every few years. It makes dancers, as well as critics, especially sensitive to the question of where they fit in. That question lies behind two of the more unusual dance events this season. One event was a case of returning to the original seeds of a current trend. A student of the Bauhaus era named Debra McCall reconstructed several dances made in the 1920s by the visual artist Oskar Schlemmer. His dances, if that indeed is what they are, demonstrate the relationships between space and moving bodies. The names of his dances tell all: "Space Dance," "Form Dance," "Gesture Dance," "Block Play." Much more charming than they sound, Schlemmer's experiments with the ABCs of

GERALD S. ACKERMAN

Gordon's *Trying Times* is postmodernism with a difference.

Nancy Goldner studied ballet at the School of American Ballet. She has written about dance for **The Nation, Dance News** and **The Christian Science Monitor** and is the author of **The Stravinsky Festival of the New York City Ballet.** She has taught dance history and criticism at various universities and is on the editorial board of the **International Encyclopedia of Dance,** to be published by Scribner's.

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movement would nevertheless be consigned to the quaint chapter of the history book were it not for the fact that, for some twenty years now, generations of dancers have been tinkering with the same basics in more or less the same way. Call these generations minimalists, postmodernists, post-postmodernists or what you will, they were all there for the Bauhaus reconstructions.

To me, this outpouring of public interest was more interesting than the dances. Is Schlemmer's work a justification for all those choreographers who today are still stripping down and peeling away? Is it a ratification? A model of how to do it? Is Schlemmer the attic one can rummage through comfortably, knowing that the objects to be found there will be different enough to excite but familiar enough to soothe? Whatever. The Schlemmer performances confirmed that dancers need to know that what they do now has been done before. We live in conservative times.

One way to transcend conservatism is to call yourself a man of all seasons. One does not search for one's identity in the past; rather, one is ecumenical, fair-minded, mature. Rather than fit the imprint of a generation, one must rise above it. This is what David Gordon preached in his three-week run of *Trying Times*. Gordon is known to his quickly growing audience as a postmodernist with a difference: he's funny and has a true gift for theatrical flair. In *Trying Times* Gordon set out to dismember the postmodern tag. He, too, would return to the source. He would dare to choreograph a dance to Stravinsky's *Apollo*, a score that just so happened to be the inspiration for Balanchine's first extant masterpiece (1928). In using a score and ballet so emblematic of contemporary classicism, Gordon ensured that everyone would understand what he was up to. And by using that emblem in his own, kind way, he would thus forge the links between generations.

What Gordon's 1982 *Apollo* is like is less important than that he made it. Thanks to the *Apollo* number, which does have its stately moments, *Trying Times* is the year's most statementy dance. One can't argue with the statement, except to harbor some disappointment that so exuberant a personality as Gordon should suddenly become the benign peace-maker. But, not to worry. Gordon rewards himself for being so appreciative of the past. The closing scene of *Trying Times* is a star-trip fantasy, with Gordon in the star's seat. He places himself at the center of a heated trial; during the course of the proceedings, which is mostly in dialogue, he is accused of selling out, of misleading his company and his public, of "promising beans but serving tuna fish instead." Which all leads up, quite hilariously and quite self-servingly, to his vindication. Remaking *Apollo* was a nice thing to do, David, and you made a nice dance, too. But it's not so radical as to deserve a trial. These days, looking backward is about par for the course.

JORGE FATAUROS

The Dutch National Ballet: dancing under van Manen's gloomy skies.

Dance is often called the international language. Dancers love to report on how studios all over the world look the same, smell the same, sound the same. One stands at the barre for the opening *plies*, the teacher intones, "Preparation, and one . . ." and for all one knows, the dancer says, one could be in Rome or Shanghai, but the studio remains its singular self. For those who watch dance, it's a different matter. National identity often is expressed through a preference for one kind of choreographic style over another. As Gordon's piece indicated, our national emblem is Balanchine; Americans cherish him (or at least, feel they ought to). The English reaction ranges from indifference to hostility. The French have traditionally taken to Cunningham, while Americans are still dragging their feet. By now these are old, time-honored prejudices. Within the last decade something called European modern ballet has become a major force. This "style" is particularly prevalent in Germany and the Netherlands and has made inroads in North American companies as well. For the 1982-83 season the Brooklyn Academy of Music is importing a half-dozen European troupes for its Ballet International series. The latest to have played here is the Dutch National Ballet, whose repertory is dominated by Hans van Manen.

To my American ears and eyes, the wheels of van Manen's ballets clank around but the landscape stays the same—an overcast February sky. For the life of me, I can't fathom what's behind these ballets, why they need be so gloomy, and why they enjoy the support of the Dutch people. Best chalk it up to differences in national temperament, methinks. One way to figure their acceptance of van Manen and his ilk is to accept the theory, offered by a Dutch critic, that "serious" dance finds favor with a Calvinist ethos, which normally associates dancing with frivolity. Yet the popularity of van Manen extends way beyond Calvinists, and the problem is only partly content. A better key is in his notions of modernity. Austerely decorated, semi-abstract, and lightly dusted with emotion, his ballets represent a compromise between genuine pure-dance works and

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traditional opera-house ballet with its lavish decors and lavish stories, typically brought to a happy conclusion. Van Manen ballets don't have conclusions. His characters squabble and make up, get testy and make up again, and walk off the stage separately but equally, leaving behind them a trail of bittersweet existentialism.

With compromise, I should add, is the way an American sees van Manen and the other two choreographers of the Dutch troupe. Judging from a program note provided by the troupe, van Manen sees himself in open rebellion against the past, the opera-house ethos. When he writes that he doesn't make story ballets, he sounds as though he's renouncing Ptolemaic astronomy. Well, dear, it's already been renounced. And there might be the crux of the difference: what is settled for Americans is still a living issue for Europeans. If they can sit through a ballet in which the prince doesn't clasp his heart for love of a princess, they must be making progress.

But, what's wrong with story ballets? If van Manen is referring to John Cranko's inane narratives, which put the Stuttgart Ballet on the international map for a while, he should distinguish between mode and *modus operandi*. If he's talking about *Swan Lake* or contemporary realizations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, then he's rebelling against the very methods he claims for himself. The narrative elements of these ballets are not what make the story. Their substance and impact emerges through aesthetically or formally conceived constructs. We understand the gradations of characterization—who is flat and round, who takes the story forward and who comments on it — according to who is moving where on the stage and his spatial relationships to whomever else is on stage. The thickening of the story is measured by deepening powers of dance expression. The story of *Swan Lake* moves ahead not by the swan-maiden's mimed explanation of her enchantment but by the long sequence of arabesques she performs with the prince. That those arabesques have emotional resonance explains why dance is an art form — and why van Manen wanted to get into the choreography business in the first place.

One could read the dancers' distress signals in the three encounter duets van Manen presented with the Dutch National Ballet, and one got the point he was after in his series of stylized tangos. (The point is stylization.) But one cannot get engrossed with the working out of those points because the dance language itself, though often attractive, is not expressive. It's informational, like mime. It works at the service of an idea, but it's not the material from which ideas, or feelings, develop. Like double-crostics, van Manen's ballets have no correspondence between the set of definitions and the sentence they produce. At the end you've got a statement, but—with due apologies to puzzle fans including myself—so what?

Van Manen gives his public the blueprints of situations but doesn't know how to make us feel them. Maybe he thinks that dance is to look at, not to experience. His dancers support the thesis. They execute the motions with clarity and finesse, yet refrain from any of those personal inclinations that color movement with drama. They weigh each and every step with the same considered sobriety. Rubato is *verboten*. Because their backs are stiff and unresponsive to the motions of their arms and legs, they create the illusion of dancing in corsets; relaxation of the back would be yielding to the temptations of interpretation, they imply. The perennial command of composers that musicians "just play the notes" makes sense only as life insurance against wild violinists, but the Dutch dancers take the warning literally. Do they really think van Manen's work so inviolate that to raise a leg an inch higher on the second lift would be the height of impropriety?

While the Dutch were holding back the dikes in Brooklyn, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company was, as its wont, gushing over at the New York City Center. One of the works new to its repertory this season was by van Manen, *Songs Without Words* to the Mendelssohn cycle. A van Manenite might call the Ailey performance of it impure. I call it a joy. Granted that *Songs Without Words* is one of van Manen's happier exercises. Conceived in suite form, it is therefore committed to survey a variety of variations on a theme. The landscape must change. We see happy lovers as well as dismal ones. Granted also that for once van Manen avoids the ambiguity game. As the curtain falls the four pairs of lovers embrace unequivocally.

But am I now writing about choreography or the topic with which I entered the Ailey season, that of performance? The Ailey dancers clasped each other unequivocally. And in clasping every other opportunity for story-telling, they made *Songs Without Words* hum with sweet, soft music. The story-telling I saw involved not only gesture — as when a man on the make makes off with one of a trio of girls, or a man and woman join hands in chummy compact. It also involved more abstract kinds of expressivity. The sharp, upward thrust of a lift, coming right after a section of horizontal movement, introduced a new character, as it were. It was the dancers who gave those lifts extra punch. The tension in the legs of the tragic lovers underscored the meaning of their slow revolutions around each other. Stiffly-held backs took on extra significance when seen in conjunction with blithely arched backs. These accents and inflections are interpretive, a case of the dancers adding their two cents to the choreographer's till. Van Manen gained everything by it. ■

While the Dutch were holding back the dikes in Brooklyn, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company was gushing over at the New York City Center.

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TRADE WINDS

William Cole

Gullible's Travels

As I Was Saying. . .

"Growing up is a kind of gullible's travels," I wrote in my last Trade Winds column in June 1978. I don't know if I've grown appreciably in these past five years but I've read a lot, and that amounts to the same thing. The enthusiasm about books, and for buttonholing people about good ones, remains as strong. Here are a bunch, published late last year, that are still available (blast those publishers who put good books out of print!).

Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals (Belknap/Harvard University Press, $17.50) is a boiling-down by Leslie A. Marchand of many volumes. As the lively Lord wrote, "Anything that confirms, or extends, one's observations on life and character delights me." He'll delight you indeed, the scamp. *Robert Lowell: A Biography* by Ian Hamilton (Random House, $19.95) is a good, solid picture of the man who wanted to be, and became, America's Top Poet. A painful childhood; periods of insanity, drinking and womanizing; fighting his way through a disordered life. *Selected Poems* by Galway Kinnell (Houghton Mifflin, $12.50) is the best from many volumes by a contemporary judged to be our strongest poet. *James Joyce* by Richard Ellmann (Oxford, $35.00). A new, much-added-to edition of a book first published in 1959. This book is to biography what *Ulysses* is to the novel. Changed throughout, a hundred additional pages, and the number of illustrations grown from thirty to 117. *Frank O'Connor Collected Stories,* introduction by (the aforementioned) Richard Ellmann (Knopf, paper, $8.95). Yes, and O'Connor is to the short story in our century what Chekhov was in his. John Updike is our foremost Man of Letters, and his novel, *Bech is Back* (Knopf, $13.95), is a total delight. Updike-as-Philip Roth, if you can imagine that—and it works!

King of the Beats

The most surprising revelation in Joyce Johnson's *Minor Characters* (Houghton Mifflin, $13.95)—a memoir featuring Jack Kerouac and his beat friends—is that Jack, author of the quintessential car book, *On the Road*, didn't drive. He could sort of, but only slowly and very carefully. Joyce Glassman, as she was then, was Kerouac's New York girl, the only child of quiet, mouse-like Jewish parents. In her teens she revolted and took up the Bohemian life. She fell in love with the king of the beats, whom she met on a blind date arranged by Allen Ginsberg, and he moved in with her that night. She says, "As a lover he was fierce but oddly brotherly and somewhat reticent." Her main role was as his protector when, at the height of his fame, he was besieged by the press and would-be friends. Jack was a loveable, big puppy dog of a man, frequently drunk, and I remember seeing them at the tail end of parties, Joyce pulling his sleeve, saying, "C'mon Jack, time to go." Joyce, too, was—is—a writer and has published two good novels. Jack was hooked on his mother and, when he bought a house for her on Long Island and took up residence there, the mother forbid him to have Ginsberg or William Burroughs visit. "Which sounds strange," he said plaintively to Joyce on the phone, "since I'm buying the house and I'm thirty-six years old."

All-Around Writer

Almost all poets are perforce academics, and Reynolds Price, a professor at Duke, is no exception. But my, he's a productive all-around writer, too! In twenty years, five novels, two books of stories, one of essays, a play, and a book of translations from the Bible. And now Atheneum has just published, in a handsome paperback edition for $7.95, his first book of poetry, *Vital Provisions.* These are mostly long poems, some on nature and some based on Bibical stories. All are clear, rich, and almost conversational in tone. But there's one short poem—the first in the book, acting almost as an epigraph, which I think is particularly fine. It's called "Angel":

Every angel from its height
Sheds a pure though blinding light,
Intermittent noon and night.
Yet—or therefore—it deserves
Thanks, attentions, steady loves:
Every angel on its height
Burns itself, itself its light.
Burn, clear angel—I observe,
Thank, attend, attempt to serve.

Knights in the Theater

It seems an unwritten law that every star of stage or screen *must* have a book. How ever do they find the time to write? In most cases, they don't: they dictate, and some professional writer, either unacknowledged or "as told to," whips the material into book form. When Laurence Olivier was 16 his father told him that he was not going to India, as his older brother had, but was going on the stage. A complete surprise to the boy, but on the stage he went, and now we have his *Confessions of an Actor* (Simon & Schuster, $16.95), a book full of surprises and delights. "Except for playing light comedy to an enraptured audience," he says, "act-

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ing is not an enjoyable craft."

He admits to being a very sexual man; there's "a fatally coquettish side to my character," and he adds, "well—too late now." He split from his first wife because of sexual incompatibility. His second marriage, to Vivien Leigh, was alternatingly tempestuous and loving and lasted for twenty years, until in fact she became an unmanageable manic depressive. He can be surprisingly coarse, speaking of the woman who was to become his third—and current—wife: "Miss Joan Plowright, whose very name was enough to make me think thoughts of love."

Sir Laurence had kind words for almost everybody in his profession, with the exceptions of Greta Garbo—he thought her rather a cold fish—and Marilyn Monroe, whose lack of professionalism was too much to bear. He rages against producer-director Jed Harris: "the most hurtful, arrogant, venomous little fiend anyone could meet—cruel, sadistic." Olivier allows that as an actor he's pretty hot stuff, and regrets that his nose had to be rearranged for almost every part he's ever played and is distressed at "the displeasingly thin hard line of my upper lip." He was always close to Noel Coward, but his dearest friend is Ralph Richardson. In 1939 he asked "Ralphie" if he should go to Hollywood and play Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. Sir Ralph thought a moment and then said, "Yes. Bit of fame. Good."

The great triumvirate of English actors—Olivier, Gielgud, and Richardson. Sirs John and Laurence have been heard from, and now joining them, reluctantly, is Sir Ralph in *Ralph Richardson: An Actor's Life* by Garry O'Connor (Atheneum, $14.95). Mr. O'Connor first approached Sir Ralph proposing that they collaborate on an autobiography. "Not a chance, dear boy." But the actor didn't particularly object to a book about himself; he wasn't much help, though. He was born in 1902 and began his career at age 18 with a small repertory company—he had to pay them for the first months. He met Olivier in 1926 and at the time thought him callow and presumptuous, "a cocky young pup full of fire and energy." They rose to the heights pretty much in tandem. He's a delicate actor, with marvelous mannerisms and a voice of great flexibility. "I don't like my face at all. It's always been a great drawback to me." For an actor he's extremely reticent; he's something of a huffy English clubman, cultivating his eccentricities. Funny, too: "Jolly useful chap, that," he once remarked to the audience, of the prompter.

From the sublime downward, we come to *Ava* by Roland Flamini (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $14.95). It must be ego that persuaded Ava Gardner to be written about at such length. Not that Mr. Flamini is vicious; he just tells it as it is, and that's pretty bad. She was a beautiful woman, yes, but morally, spiritually and intellectually vacant. Ava was born in Grabtown, North Carolina, some sixty years ago and as a teenager moved to another grabtown, Hollywood, where she had a contract as a starlet. In a short time she had an experience common to many young women; she married Mickey Rooney. When this ended she married Artie Shaw, something of an intellectual, who tried to do a Pygmalion on her. But she'd already read a book (*Gone With The Wind*) and he couldn't persuade her to crack another. Nor, apparently, did she ever. When Artie Shaw tootled off, she began a long affair which ended in marriage with Frank Sinatra, never an easy man to get along with.

While all this was going on she had a career. She was never much of an actress, but nevertheless made steady progress from walk-on bits to speaking lines to second-billing to stardom, making her biggest hits in *One Touch of Venus* and *The Barefoot Contessa*. She was foul-mouthed, a heavy drinker and, aside from the three husbands, had recorded affairs with Howard Hughes, Peter Lawford, agent Charles Feldman, John Huston, and George C. Scott. Not to

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TRADE WINDS

mention the uncelebrated, and a batch of bullfighters. Ava is now in apparently peaceful retirement in London.

Pleasures of Serendipity

It is a great publishing occasion whenever a supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary* comes out. In 1977 I wrote about *Supplement II*, which covered the letters H through N and sold for $60. It is a reflection on our times that the newest, *Supplement III*, covering words that have emerged in the twentieth century, O through Scz, sells for $125. And worth it, if you have the preceding volumes. Even if you don't, worth it for the pleasures of serendipity. I sat down with the huge volume on my lap and flipping through came across Sad Sack (1942), Schadenfreude (1952), preppy (1900), rock and roll (1934). The OED doesn't scorn slang; there's a ram-sammy—a family quarrel; Sardoodledom—a trivial play, and such exotics as schmuck and putz. 18,750 words and some 142,500 illustrative quotations.

Quiet Smiles

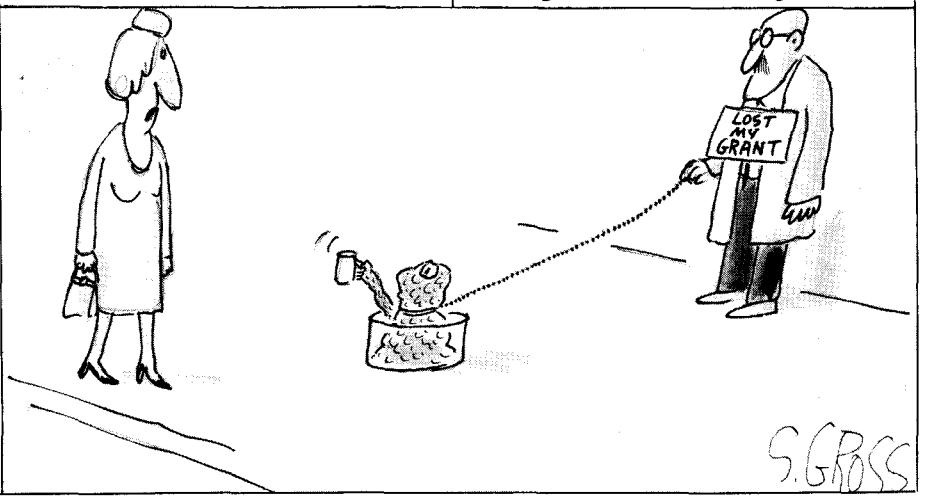
Please do not confuse Hammond Innes with Michael Innes. Both prolific, Hammond writes good thrillers, Michael is *class*. He's an Oxford don whose real name, under which he's written eighteen straight novels, is J.I.M. Stewart. As Innes he's so far done thirty-four detective novels, many featuring top cop Sir John Appleby, who's in *Sheiks and Adders* (Dodd, Mead, $10.95). The plot—which I always consider the least important part of an Innes—deals with a charity costume fete at Drool Court, and how come so many people come dressed as sheiks? Who wants to kill whom? Appleby wanders into this and eventually sets everything straight, quoting along the way from Virgil, Shakespeare, Dickens, and Congreve. Innes flings words about: inspiriting, perlustration, nobble, venation, and although there are no belly laughs there are many quiet smiles. The title puzzled me until I figured it's a play on the English children's game, Snakes and Ladders: adders figure in the plot, and he's apparently (and deplorably) pronouncing sheiks as *shakes*.

And I Quote. . .

Robert Byrne gets "A" for nerve but "F" for execution in *The Best 637 Things Anybody Ever Said* (Atheneum, $10.95). I can see myself in the Winston Churchill quote: "It is a good thing for an uneducated man to read books of quotations," since what first got me reading as a teenager was a book called *The Golden Treasury of the World's Wit and Wisdom*. But no book of quotations should contain such pallid items as this, by Unknown: "The chicken probably came before the egg because it is hard to imagine God wanting to sit on an egg." Nor the thirteen quotations by the compiler himself, all dopey: "Partying is such sweet sorrow"! About fifty of the quotations are fresh and new: Peter De Vries, "Every novel should have a beginning, a muddle, and an end." David Steinberg, "Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan—a Mount Rushmore of incompetence." Francoise Sagan, "I like men to behave like men—strong and childish." There's a good Irish bull by a non-Irishman, Yogi Berra, "If people don't want to come out to the ball park, nobody's going to stop them." Any well-read person could do a better book of 637 quotations and not repeat one from this dubious melange.

A much better value is *Morrow's International Dictionary of Contemporary Quotations* by Jonathan Green for $14.95. This is an English compilation that Morrow brought over here and tacked its name on. A couple of thousand quotations arranged by topic: "Music," "Comedy," "Business," "Sex," etc.. Among the most-quoted are Shaw, Cyril Connolly, Gore Vidal, Bob Dylan, Adlai Stevenson and, surprisingly for an English-originated book, Charles Bukowski, our leading tough-guy poet. The compiler has been taken in—there are sixteen weak quotes by "Brendan Francis"—a pseudonym of Edward F. Murphy, who puts together quotation books in this country and fabricates quotations when needed and inserts them in his books. To pick a Vidal at random, here he is in the *Observer* commenting on Ronald Reagan as "a triumph of the embalmer's art."

To close quotes, here's a bargain: from Canada comes what Harper & Row peculiarly call *The Barnes & Noble Book of Quotations*, in paper for $4.95. When published in 1981 up there it was *The Fitzhenry & Whiteside Book of Quotations* and was edited by Robert I. Fitzhenry, a transplanted American. This is also arranged by topic: from "Ability and Achievement" through the alphabet to "Youth." Not surprisingly there are many quotations from Canadians: Leonard Cohen says, "I want history to jump on Canada's spine with sharp skates." My two favorite aphorists, Sydney Smith and G.C. Lichtenberg, are well represented, the former with a well-known remark on Macaulay: "He has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful," and the latter with, "Everyone is a genius at least once a year; a real genius has his original ideas closer together." ■



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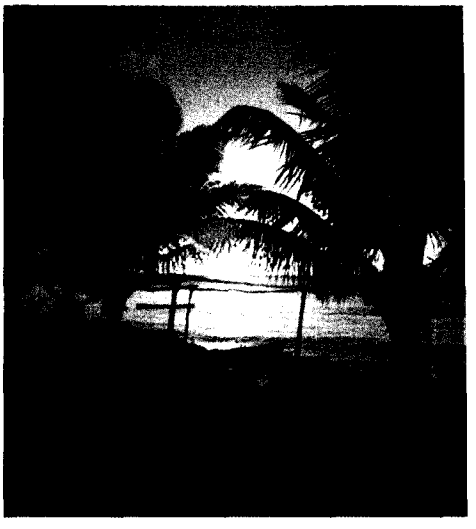

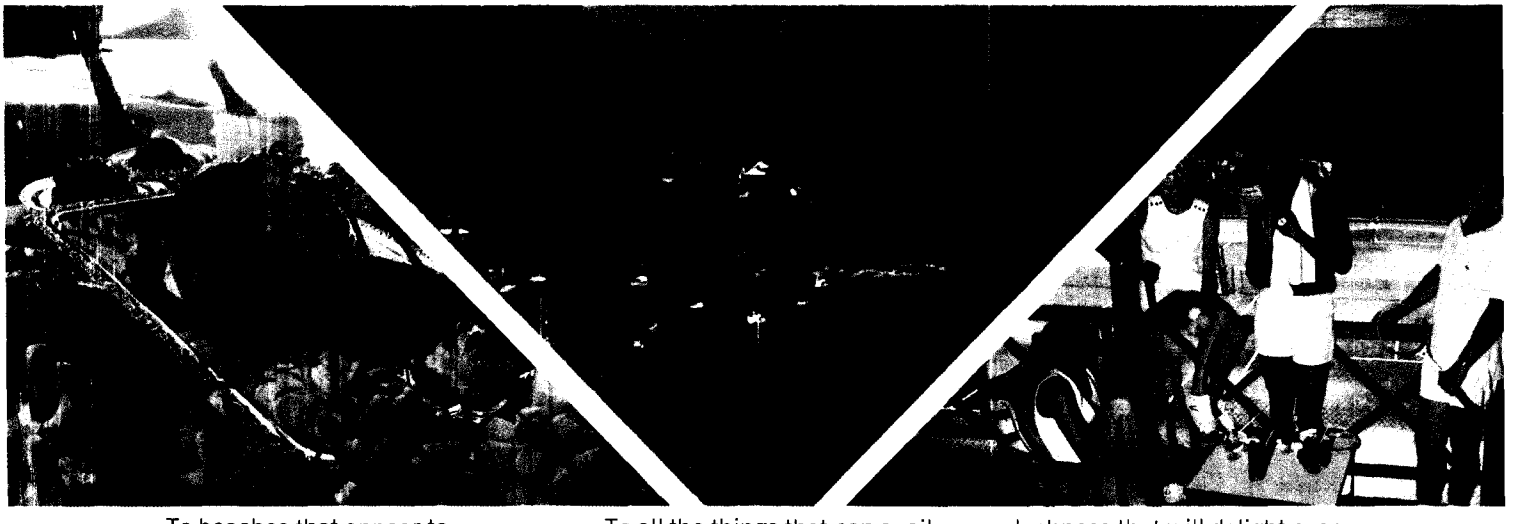

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Judith Crist

A Very Good Year

The critical pause that comes with the beginning of the calendar year does offer refreshment. Janus-like, one looks ahead with curiosity and optimism, positive that the prospect will be pleasing, and one looks back with the peaks of satisfaction in focus and the retrospect is rewarding.

This is, in fact, the beginning of the film industry's major retrospective: on February 17 the Oscar nominations will be announced, and because these are made on a peer basis (actors name actors, directors directors, etc.) these are what count professionally. The big popularity contest follows among the 3800-plus members of the Academy of Motion-Picture Arts and Sciences, with the Academy Awards to be made on April 11.

Fresh from the spate of biggies that, as always, arrived at the end of the year (to qualify for Academy nomination, be fresh in the nominators' minds and cash in on the holiday box-office), one is tempted to think that 1982 was a good year for movies. Herewith a very personal list of the best of the good, to compare with your own and with the nominations:

Above all stands **Gandhi**, Richard Attenborough's magnificent and intimate biographical epic, a thinking-man's spectacular in every sense of the term. What is remarkable and rare in a film of this scope is its revelation of the heart and mind of this saintly twentieth-century revolutionary, and its simultaneous detailing of a nation's turbulent struggle for civil rights and independence. The credit goes beyond Ben Kingsley's stunning portrait of a philosopher-tactician and the fine Anglo-American-Indian cast, beyond the vast drama and its visual glories to Attenborough's taste, intelligence and courage. His is a magnificent accomplishment.

Costa-Gavras, that master of the political thriller, surpassed himself with his first American-made English-language film, **Missing**. Released early last year, this fact-based story of a young American's disappearance during the 1973 coup in Chile is his finest work to date. Jack Lemmon, as a businessman in search of his son, and Sissy Spacek, as his daughter-in-law, make this a heart-wrenching human drama.

Sydney Pollack's **Tootsie** is not only a delicious comedic perception of bisexual humanism but also a knockout tour de force that makes Dustin Hoffman a prime candidate for best actor *and* best actress nominations. Pollack (whose 1968 *The Scalphunters* was a masterly social-comedy Western) creates a rollicking, high-speed but touchingly realistic romp, with Hoffman a dedicated unemployed actor who assumes female guise to get a soap-opera role and, in no time flat, earns stardom and suitors and falls in love with his female co-star. In the latter role, Jessica Lange, remarkable as a battered Frances Farmer in the ineffective *Frances,* is utterly winning, soft, sensuous and insecure.

Sidney Lumet's **The Verdict** is not only a beautifully realized topical thriller *cum* courtroom drama; it is also a vehicle for Paul Newman's most fully realized dramatic performance to date, as a lawyer in search of his shattered integrity. James Mason, Jack Warden and Charlotte Rampling provide fine support in this

Hoffman and Lange in *Tootsie:* delicious bisexual humanism.

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chilling story of a medical malpractice suit brought against two doctors, a hospital and the Archdiocese of Boston.

Steven Spielberg's **E.T.** is making so much money and has spawned so many commercial exploitations of the huge-eyed extraterrestrial that there's been a critical backlash against this charming and wondrous child-oriented fantasy. Its story of a little boy who befriends a creature left behind by a visiting spaceship is a lovely everyone's-wish fulfillment and a testament to the purity of childhood comprehension and loving. That this kind of fantasy film can deal with human emotions to such a powerful effect affirms the filmmaker's affectionate involvement.

Jim Brown's **Wasn't That a Time!** is an invigorating and enchanting documentary about The Weavers, the quartet that re-introduced us to our folk music in the Forties and Fifties and their reunion concert at Carnegie Hall in 1980. The film is not simply a memorial filled with lively and delicious sound: it is an enduring affirmation of the social and political vision of those who sang—and cared—about love and work and freedom.

Istvan Szabo's **Mephisto**, which won the 1981 foreign language film Oscar but was released here only last year, is based on the story of the great German actor, Gustav Grundgens, who became the darling of the Nazis. Sparked by Klaus Maria Brandauer's brilliant title-role performance, the film evolves as a striking study of adaptation, compromise and collaboration.

Jerzy Skolimowski's **Moonlighting**, his story of four Polish workmen trapped in London when martial law was declared in their homeland in December 1981, is an involving drama of exile and alienation. With Jeremy Irons as the foreman and three Polish actors in support, this English-language film explores in small and deep focus the morality of survival for the group and for the man in charge.

Blake Edwards' **Victor/Victoria** epitomizes the witty farce and lavish lowbrow comedy of which Edwards is a past master; only he would package a serious consideration of role-playing in this luscious, ribald and elegant comedy. Julie Andrews, as a woman posing as a man posing as a woman; Robert Preston, as her homosexual mentor and best friend; James Garner as an admirer and Lesley Ann Warren as his doll provide the perfect quartet for this marvelous mix of fun and philosophical games.

Peter MacNicol, Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline in *Sophie's Choice*.

Richard Benjamin's **My Favorite Year** marks the actor's auspicious directorial debut and a high spot in Peter O'Toole's acting career with its delightful mix of nostalgia and comedy. Call it a comedy *a clef* in its fable of 1954, that golden age of television when shows were live, young comedy writers were wide-eyed and a movie star could turn out to be not only an actor, but also a hero and a human being. Or just call it one of the warmest-hearted comedies of recent years.

Small doubt that O'Toole, Kingsley, Newman and Hoffman will be among the best-actor nominees, with Kingsley the odds-on favorite so far. So is Meryl Streep, for her exquisite portrait of the Polish survivor in *Sophie's Choice*, Alan Pakula's more literary than cinematic adaptation of the William Styron novel; she will probably be joined in the best-actress category by Jessica Lange for *Frances*, if not for *Tootsie*; by Diane Keaton in *Shoot the Moon*; Barbara Sukowa in Fassbinder's *Lola*, and Debra Winger of *An Officer and a Gentleman*. And for supporting-player nominations, one thinks of John Lithgow and Glenn Close in *The World According to Garp*; Preston and Warren in *Victor/Victoria*; Jim Metzler in *Tex*; Lou Gossett, Jr., in *An Officer and a Gentleman*; Terri Garr, George Gaynes and Bill Murray in *Tootsie*—it's a long list.

And why limit ourselves by tradition to ten films of excellence? Easy to add to that list: *Das Boot* (The Boat), *Lola, Three Brothers, An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano, Le Beau Marriage, Garde a Vue, Fitzcarraldo, Diva,* come to mind among the foreign-language films. And one remembers the pleasures of: *The Long Good Friday, Brimstone and Treacle, Still of the Night, Heartaches, Eating Raoul, The Last Unicorn, Lookin' to Get Out, Fast Times at Ridgemont High, A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy, Don's Party, Poltergeist, Annie, Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid, The Chosen, Diner, Right is Wrong, Richard Pryor Live on the Sunset Strip.* Add, subtract, and prepare for the best—and worst—of this year. ■

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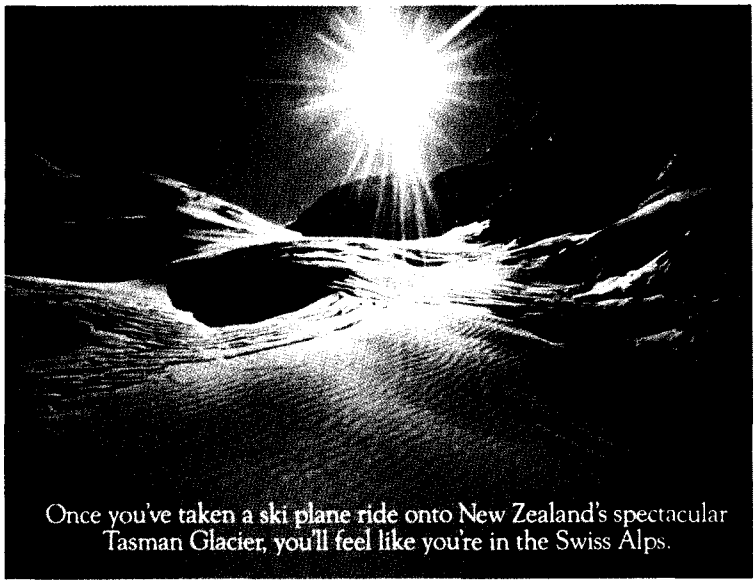
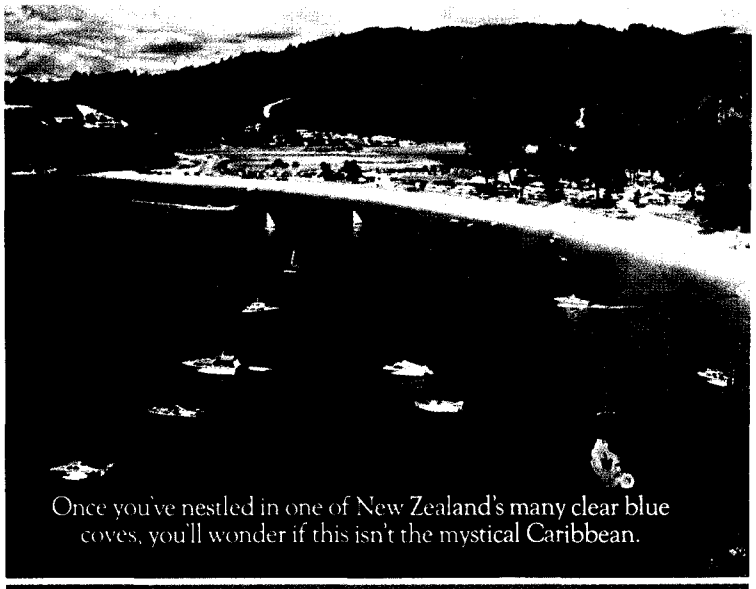
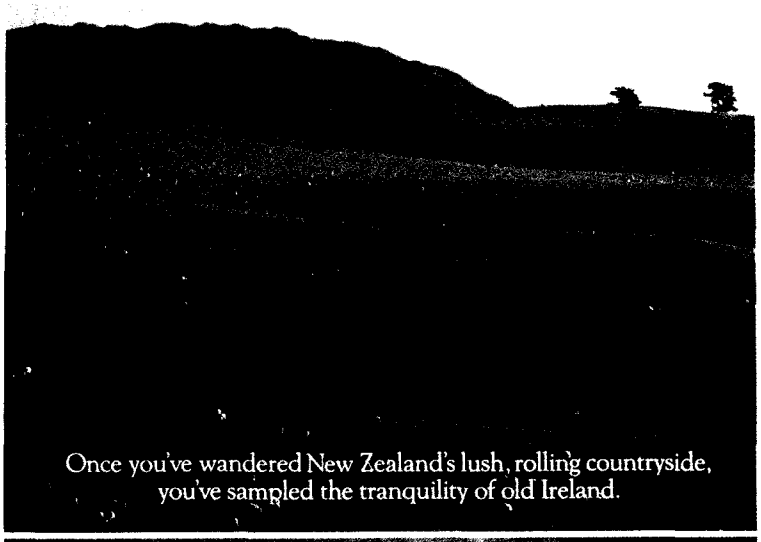
Once you've seen one country, you've seen them all.



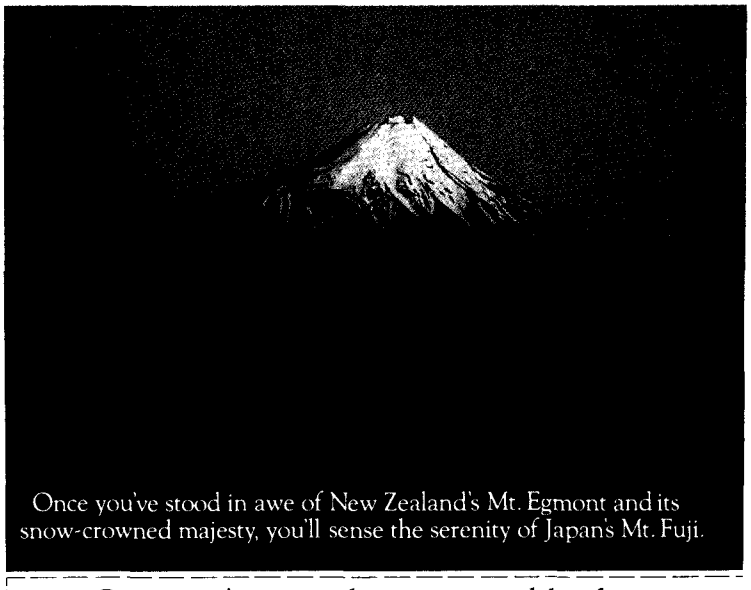
Once you've taken a ski plane ride onto New Zealand's spectacular Tasman Glacier, you'll feel like you're in the Swiss Alps.



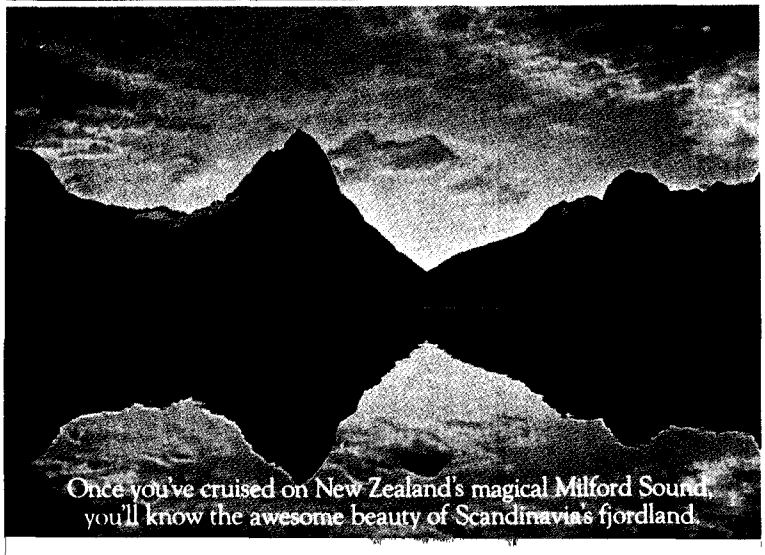
Once you've nestled in one of New Zealand's many clear blue coves, you'll wonder if this isn't the mystical Caribbean.



Once you've wandered New Zealand's lush, rolling countryside, you've sampled the tranquility of old Ireland.



Once you've stood in awe of New Zealand's Mt. Egmont and its snow-crowned majesty, you'll sense the serenity of Japan's Mt. Fuji.



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Linda Sanders

New Face on a Two-faced Opera

Two notable productions made their debut during the Metropolitan Opera's fall season: Mozart's *Idomeneo,* directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, and Verdi's **Macbeth,** directed by Sir Peter Hall. Both were far from ordinary and as dissimilar in nature and effect as two sisters in a Gothic romance. *Idomeneo,* the pretty one, charmed audiences with its visual and vocal splendor, angelic grace and good breeding — only the ungenerous would have found its beauty seriously marred by a slight coldness. Bred for success, it was listed among the "Year's Best" in *The New York Times*. Then there was Mr. Hall's *Macbeth,* the funny-looking, freckled one. Bookish and overimaginative, rude, self-conscious and tripping over its gown, it made its debut to a booing and jeering crowd, followed up by a *Times* report that it "may just be the worst new production to struggle onto the Metropolitan Opera's stage in modern history." But as usual, life copies art, and it's the odd one that most engages the mind and memory — not as an object of fun but because, good or bad, it had character.

"Character" is a word Verdi used to describe what he wanted to bring to *Macbeth*. First produced in 1847 and extensively revised almost twenty years later, *Macbeth* has been called a stylistic "patchwork" between the Verdi of *Ernani* and *Attila* and the considerably more sophisticated Verdi of 1865. But if he changed certain features of the opera, his original attitude toward it remains evident throughout: "This tragedy is one of the greatest creations of man. . . . If we can't make something great out of it let us at least try to do something out of the ordinary."

That might have been the motto for the Met's production team as well. According to Musical Director James Levine, the point of departure was to take a "fresh look at Verdi's first Shakespeare opera." A statement like that should be instantly suspect — recalling interviews in which a performer earnestly stresses the importance of "making music" over "technical expertise" as if it's a virtue, a bold new concept — but in this case it seemed to be the simple truth. Mr. Hall's staging was often a close, almost literal rendering of Verdi's score, an equivalent mosaic of simplicity and sophistication, crude antics and noble beauty.

The crude antics belong of course to those troubling creatures, the witches. It's often pointed out that Verdi thought of this opera as having three characters: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and the Witches, three choruses that correspond to Shakespeare's three Weird Sisters. They caper and cackle and utter; they're comical but not comic; they don't relieve the tragedy, they hound it into existence. Verdi wanted "at least six" witches in each group; Mr. Hall provided us with a swarm of them, multitudinous hags incarnadine, who romped about the stage and flew by on broomsticks, all presided over by a big orange moon. (In the third act they returned with stuffed black cats and spooky dime-store bats.) The women of the Met chorus were not expert in this particular form of silliness, and one felt duped when closer inspection revealed some witches to be muscled males in crones' clothing. But evidently it was not their inability to be consummately silly that bothered audiences, so much as their being silly at all.

How we are to regard the witches is no less problematic in Verdi than it is in Shakespeare. Who or what are they supposed to be? Andrew Porter cites a passage Verdi knew from A.W. Schlegel that, he suggests, formed the composer's thinking about the witches. After maintaining that superstition has a foundation in human nature, Schlegel says that Shakespeare "calls up from [our] hidden abysses that dread of the unknown, that secret presage of a dark side of nature and a world of spirits." This theme was more prosaically echoed in a pre-production feature on *Macbeth,* in which one cast member shrugs that in 1982 people still check their horoscopes and join mystical cults.

Even so, while few would deny that Schlegel's "dread of the unknown" has persisted through the ages, the emblems of dread *do* change — have changed, even since Verdi's time — and witches are no longer an adequate metaphor for our fears. (They're still popular, of course, but only for fun, as a vacation from our real specters.) Mr. Hall has addressed his witches to a twentieth-century audience that is theoretically prepared to enjoy them. Not only does he reproduce the giddy splendor of Verdi's music and, for that matter, Shakespeare's lines (can anyone who has his witches add "wool of bat" to their soup be entirely serious?), but he also provides the contrast Verdi dictates between the witches' grotesque behavior when alone and their solemnity when speaking to credulous Macbeth, underlining the dirty trick these two-faced hags are playing on him.

Virtually everything in the story is two-faced or double-edged: fair is foul, foul is fair; nature, both human and earthly, has gone on a rampage; the dead refuse to stay dead. In

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Shakespeare, this mixed-up reality and web of deception apply particularly to the character of Macbeth: is he a good man gone bad, or never very good to begin with; are the poetic soliloquies we're privy to the pangs of genuine conscience, or the bogus platitudes of a man not even dimly aware that he's moved solely by fears for his own hide? Verdi's Macbeth, on the other hand, may be deceitful to everyone in his hellish world (except his wife), but there's little reason to suppose he's deceiving himself (and us) in his private moments. Anchored by Verdi's music, which more or less tells us what to think, this Macbeth is clearly the noble general gone bad, whose tortures of conscience are intended to be very real.

Watching Sherrill Milnes in the role, however, I was reminded of Mary McCarthy's depiction of Macbeth as "the eternal executive." Attractive and vocally dependable, Milnes negotiated the role like a corporate deal, handling each new dramatic task — horror, confusion, temporary indifference to life, courageous determination — with suave authority. His Lady Macbeth was a compatible consort. Renata Scotto, whose petite stature and engaging persona made her an unlikely candidate for a role that calls for a dominating presence and "tragic" scope, played a Lady Macbeth not of power but of spunky charm. Decked out in ringlets for her opening scene, as Mrs. Perfect Hostess in the banquet scene, and as a crop-wielding Scarlet O'Hara freshly alighted from horseback in the third act duet, her character seemed distinctly at odds with her biggest vocal moments.

Peculiar, too, was the couple's relationship. In the feature mentioned above, Miss Scotto and Mr. Milnes cast some light on the subject: "They are a beautiful couple," says Miss Scotto, "sharing a passionate relationship and acting as a unit." Directing our attention to the couple's first scene, Mr. Milnes adds that "rehearsing with Peter Hall, Renata and I stressed the couple's loving relationship. After Lady Macbeth's aria they are immediately reunited in a loving embrace." Nowhere, however, does Verdi really indicate that the intimacy these two share is of the kissy sort, any more than Shakespeare does: his Macbeth addresses his wife with trite endearments such as "dearest chuck," while she pointedly calls him nothing at all, except perhaps "child" or "brainsickly" coward. In the first act duet that immediately follows Duncan's murder, Verdi presents a sophisticated picture of their intimacy that would make any stage kiss look drab. Compressing the night's activities into a relatively few minutes, he conveys all the excitement and horror these two are feeling at the murder. Through the musical color and pace, and the play of the vocal lines, their brief, panicky dialogue ("Did you hear something?" "What did you say?" "Me?" "I thought you said something" etc.) becomes not just an essay in fear, but a portrait of the abstracted, automatic, sometimes incoherent conversation peculiar to long and intimate acquaintances.

If director Hall's scenes with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were a little pallid, his third act witches' ballet had no such problem. Featured was a non-speaking, and in this case non-clothed, Hecate, goddess of sorcery. Hall judged well: in the artificial world of the opera stage, nothing could seem more alien, more other-worldly and beautiful, than something as tangibly real as a naked woman. Her appearance was preceded by the marvelous vision of a steaming cauldron suspended high above the stage, with a few witches hovering about it and the rest teeming below. Later, we were treated to the frankly startling vision of eight or nine romantically clad ballerinas, in a no-holds-barred rendering of Verdi's bathetically dainty *coro ballabile*. The entire scene was regularly booed, its freakish vitality evidently offensive to an audience accustomed to barefoot girls and handsome lads, the merry peasants and spirited Gypsies of the usual ballet fare.

If this production didn't entirely work, it wasn't because of excess in the supernatural realm, but rather a lack of it in the human realm. Without vocal excitement, the principals were in no position to retrieve our attention from the powers around them — neither were they given much directorial help — and the uneasy result was an imbalance of extremes. But, consistent or not, the production had thought and imagination written all over it. While it sometimes referred to cliches, putting it marginally within the area of camp, it rarely resorted to them in earnest. In these days, as in Verdi's, that takes character. ■

Sherill Milnes plays Macbeth as "the eternal executive."

Linda Sanders, **SR's** music critic, has written for the **SoHo News, The New York Times, Fanfare** record magazine, **Parabola** quarterly and other publications.

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Gregory Sandow

Song Albums: Strings of Pearls

I especially enjoy records when they let me hear music in ways that concerts don't allow. Once I listened to almost all of Verdi's operas — one a day, in chronological order, for nearly a month — and learned, of all things, that *Rigoletto* was even better than I'd thought. I'd known the piece for years, but to understand how inspired it is I had to hear it in its proper place, seventeenth in line after sixteen intriguing and varied, but for the most part much grayer, early works.

If you want to survey a single composer's development, you might find it easier and more fun to sit down with three distinguished sets from Pathe-Marconi, the French branch of Angel's parent company, EMI: the complete songs of **Faure** (2C 165-12831/5, $59.90, five discs), of **Debussy** (2C 165-16371/4, $47.92, four discs), and of **Poulenc** (2C 165-16231/5, $59.90, five discs). Gerard Souzay and Elly Ameling sing on all three, joined by Mady Mesple, Michele Command, and Frederica von Stade (Debussy), and Nicolai Gedda, Michel Senechal, and William Parker (Poulenc); Souzay's long-time accompanist, Dalton Baldwin, is the pianist throughout.

Do not judge Faure by his first song, which he wrote when he was 16 and which sounds more like a French ballet score than the more delicate, private, and intense music he wrote later on. But his second has a quietly eager voice of its own, and his third, written only a year after the first, is already unforgettable, not so much for its passive piano part as for its vocal melody, so effortlessly shaped by the words that it becomes itself a kind of poetry. Not all of what follows is good, but that's part of the point: you don't know much about an artist until you've seen the bad work, which is sure to be there, as well as the good. This point is most readily demonstrated by a composer's songs, which can be more thoroughly bad for the minute or two they last than any larger work is likely to remain.

Faure is banal when he's not at his best, but he's never careless; you can hear him at age 20 link stanzas for one brief moment in an otherwise coarse number called *Barcarolle,* as deftly as he would seventeen years later in the much more supple music of one of his best songs, *Mandoline.* At 30 he wrote the sinuous melody of *Au bord de l'au,* and at 33 composed the *Serenade toscane,* which is much blanker but somehow in the same vein. It is as if the idea of writing sinuous melody had lain dormant during three years in which he wrote no songs at all, and needed to be tried out as one might flex a neglected muscle, before it could once more be used to powerful effect — which is just how he used it immediately afterward, in what must be his most famous song, *Apres un reve.* At 40, he wound ecstatic piano counterpoint around a vocal melody for the first time in a little-known, understated song called *Nocturne;* he returned to the technique again and again, most notably six years later in *En sourdine* which, in its rapt, hush and perfectly judged harmonic detail (equivalent to a fine miniaturist's control of color), shows how passionate, and at the same time how modest and deft, he could be. It's the first piece I'd play for anyone who doubted Faure's genius.

His later songs are neglected (none of them are in the published Faure collection most American singers are likely to have), perhaps because they're so subtle. Vocal lines and accompaniments are all but weightless as if, like Wagner in *Parsifal,* Faure had turned inward as he grew older, forsaking outward show to make his points only with harmony even more finely shaded than before. Still, there's a breath-takingly quiet evocation of rippling water in the piano part of *Reflets dans l'eau,* a song he wrote in 1919, when he was 74; these late works were a real discovery for me, and may well be for anyone else willing to give them the close attention they deserve.

Debussy outdid Faure by writing his own first song, which singers still program, when he was only 14. He didn't find himself as quickly as Faure did: his early works are sometimes vague, and then sometimes distractingly busy, with vocal and piano lines that strain for effect (above all in the unpublished *Rondel chinois)* as do actors whose gestures are too frequent, too mannered, and too large. Then on side three comes a major turning point. Having found texts as lush as the musical style he was beginning to form, and having learned from Wagner ways to control musical ideas that his conservative teachers would have considered unkempt, he pulled himself together at age 25 with his *Cinq Poemes de Charles Baudelaire,* which sound at one moment like the first work of his maturity, and at the next like the last work of his youth. From there on you can hear him tame his sprawling piano parts and move, step by audible and sometimes awkward step, toward the vocal writing, midway between structured melody and recitative, that reached its peak in the darkly magical *Chansons de Bilitis* (and at about the same time in *Pelleas et Melisande).* Everything after the first two sides of

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these records is good, and everything on the last three sides is luminous, an absolute must for anyone who doesn't know this repertoire. Unlike Faure, Debussy never found a single style to endlessly refine, but instead stayed open to new ideas until the end of his life.

Poulenc's development, by contrast, is disappointing. At least he takes us into our own century, when — as Guillaume Apollinaire says in a poem that became the text of one of Poulenc's songs — the people the world calls artists are not composers or painters, but movie actors. Since he used popular music much as Bartok used Hungarian folk tunes, he was by Apollinaire's standard the most modern composer of his time, far more than Webern, say, or Schoenberg, whose purely musical techniques were much more radical. Or aren't artists supposed to be open to anything popular? It's a bad omen, though, that his best known and in some ways most inventive songs are his first, the *Bestiare* cycle, which he wrote when he was 20. When he settles into his maturity somewhere on the third side of this collection, his songs start sounding too much alike. Chords as plush as featherbeds move forward at a stately pace in the slow ones; the wry fast ones that might as well be his trademark are almost always angular, out of focus but somehow balanced, like sketches by Picasso or Paul Klee. Most of his songs, fast or slow, have endings they don't need, endings that don't emerge naturally but instead seem added almost out of politeness, as if in Poulenc's world well-bred composers weren't allowed to finish their works without taking formal leave. But all these complaints only mean that I had more fun sampling the songs one or a few at a time than plowing through all five discs at once. There are enough treasures here to keep you happy for a month or two, until you know them all. Is any music as irresistible as Poulenc's miniatures, such as the angels playing Mozart in *Les Anges musiciens* or the virgin in *L'offrande,* advised by the god of love to amuse herself with her votive candle until the lover she is praying for appears?

If Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau were a world-famous restaurant, Souzay and Ameling would be smaller eating places, far off the beaten track but rated three stars by Michelin. Much to my surprise, Faure's last songs are too delicate even for them, and for the otherwise strong and superbly adaptable Baldwin, too; but in everything else they're models of refinement and of precise emotional, musical, and technical control. The one singer on these sets who can match them is Frederica von Stade, almost dizzily sensual in Debussy's *Ariettes oubliees;* though in his dry way the famous French character tenor Michel Senechal comes close, and so does the young American baritone William Parker, who needs only to make the character of each song a little more distinct. Michele Command, a mezzo new to me, is a bit plodding on the other hand (you might want to supplement her performance of the *Chansons de Bilitis* with Ameling's on CBS M-37210), and Nicolai Gedda, despite powerful work throughout his career in opera, is too coarse. Mady Mesple is so unpleasantly acrid and tremulous that we're lucky she sings very little. Each set is beautifully boxed, with cover art that evokes the precise color of each composer's work, though in the booklets inside there are problems: ponderous essays on Faure and Debussy, no English translation of Faure's texts, and French texts in all three sets that don't always agree with what's being sung, to name only three.

But I'm complaining again, as I did about Poulenc, when what I really want to say is that, faults and all, these records sound and look good enough to make a collector feel like a kid in a candy store. If you can't find them locally you can order them by mail from International Book and Record Distributors (40-11 24th Street, L.I.C., NY 11101), whose catalogue of imported specialties you'll want in any case. A record, after all, is most enjoyable when it brings you music in ways that even most records don't allow. ■

Gregory Sandow, **SR's** record reviewer, is a composer and writer who has written on music for the **Village Voice, Ovation, Opera News, The Absolute Sound,** and other publications.

Talk about your rotten, dumb luck. I wrote "Night on Fat Mountain," "Night on Ugly Mountain"—nothing. Along comes this guy writes "Night on* Bald *Mountain"—and it CLICKS!

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JAZZ BRIEFS

Ricky Ford: *Interpretations*
Muse-MR 5275

Not only does this album bless us with the tenor sax wizardry of 28-year-old Ricky Ford, it showcases one of his favorite rhythm sections: pianist John Hicks, bassist Walter Booker, and drummer Jimmy Cobb. In addition, we are treated to Wallace Roney's trumpet and Robert Watson's alto sax work on three of the album's seven pieces. The result is tremendously satisfying.

"Interpretations Opus 1" is a slow and lyric tune subtitled "Lady A." Ford's playing is reminiscent of Wayne Shorter's in *Footprints,* and bassist Booker ranges far and wide. In the second "interpretation," called "Bostonova," Ford combines samba and bossa nova elements, in Getz-like fashion, with the bop style of Gillespie's *Night in Tunisia.* The third interpretation, "Se AABBA," features the sextet. It is Latin-influenced, and heavily syncopated within an upbeat tempo. As clear as his demonstration of Getz's style was in Opus 2, here Ford gives us a taste of Texas tenor—of Illinois Jacquet or Arnett Cobb. His accompanists work together to create a neo-big band sound. "Interpretations Opus 5" also delivers a big, swinging sound and features Watson on alto, sounding as if he just got off the train from New Orleans.

Aside from the five interpretations, Ford has squeezed two single pieces onto his fifth album. On "Moon Mist," a ballad, Ford sounds breathier and uses more vibrato, much in the style of Ben Webster and Colman Hawkins. With Booker playing a walking bass, the quartet creates the image of a 1940s city-scape. The album closes with a piece called "Dexter." One has to assume, given the composition's hard bop roots complete with sudden dynamic changes, that Ford has named it after Gordon. Hicks' best contribution to the album comes here.

No doubt Ricky Ford is going to be around for a long time to come. *Interpretations* demonstrates he has a real sense of tenor sax history and that he recognizes the talent and contributions of those who have preceded him.

—JONATHAN W. POSES

Bobby Hutcherson: *Solo Quartet*
Contemporary 14009

What a treat: that resonant vibraphonist and prolific session player, Bobby Hutcherson, as leader. Increasingly in demand as a sideman, Hutcherson has recently appeared in Chico Freeman's *Destiny's Dance* and Woody Shaw's *Master of the Art. Solo Quartet* offers a fuller exposure of his talents, both as a soloist and within a quartet.

On the solo side, all Hutcherson originals, he is overdubbed on twenty-four tracks, playing not only vibes but marimba, bass marimba, bells, chimes, xylophone and boo. The side begins with "Gotcha," which features the bass marimba as lead instrument. It is a captivating and accessible opener that leads into "For You, Mom and Dad," a piece that is almost Burtonesque, nearly Metheny-like, in its open-endedness. "Ice Cream Man" rounds out the side. Using the bass marimba to set his bottom end, Hutcherson creates a moody and even haunting piece that belies its name.

On side two, Hutcherson plays with a quartet that includes longtime friend Herbie Lewis on bass, the sensitive Billy Higgins on drums and McCoy Tyner on piano.

"La Alhambra," another Hutcherson original, features a soaring bridge that the group seems to discover anew each time it comes around. It is during this piece that the clarity of this recording (Contemporary's first digital effort) is fully realized.

Two tasteful standards follow. The first is a swinging version of "Old Devil Moon"—bluesy, driving, and melodic all at once. Tyner's piano work is particularly notable, and Lewis smoothly demonstrates his range. On "My Foolish Heart," the brush-and-cymbal work of Higgins and Tyner's light touch are beautifully juxtaposed with Hutcherson's rainbow-like forays to the limits of his instrument.

—JONATHAN W. POSES

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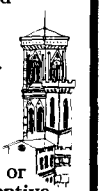

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BOOKS

Fluid Conversation, Crystalline Letters

Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner
edited by William Maxwell, Viking Press, 306 pp., $26
Reviewed by Meryle Secrest

David Garnett used to run a literary bookshop on Taviston Street in London, and the first time he met Sylvia Townsend Warner they struck up a conversation about the beauty of the Essex marshes. Before he knew it, he was agreeing to visit them in the company of this young, dark, eager and aspiring poet with frizzy hair and glasses. As they splashed about that gray and muddy winter morning, Sylvia gave an amazing display of "verbal fireworks," he wrote later. "Ideas, epigrams and paradoxes raced through her mind and poured from her mouth as though she were delirious."

Conversation, Cyril Connolly observed, is a very perishable commodity, but one of the remarkable aspects about the late Townsend Warner's cornucopic imagination is that so much of it seems to have transferred itself to paper. Unlike Bernard Berenson, another conversationalist of formidable eminence, whose pen barely conveys the flash and dash of his agile wit (the most tedious book in the world has to be *The Selected Letters of Bernard Berenson*), Townsend Warner's brilliance loses nothing in transition. Her words pivot and sparkle on the page with such an aspect of happy improvisation that one has to believe her a marathon typist (but then, she occasionally wrote letters by hand). Despite this, her scudding sentences betray certain signs of having been crafted. She was, for all her artlessness, a born stylist.

It is therefore perhaps not surprising to learn that she had intended to be a composer and, had World War I not intervened, would have studied composing with Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna. Happily for the future admirers of her poems, seven novels, and collections of short stories (almost a 150 of her short stories were published in *The New Yorker*), Townsend Warner was diverted into making munitions. The first article she ever wrote described the experience.

Sylvia Townsend Warner, a born stylist.

Her introduction to writing was unorthodox, but then so was her life. In a foreword that is a model of everything a biographical sketch should be (i.e., admiring without being credulous, forthright without being indelicate), her longtime editor at *The New Yorker*, William Maxwell, states that she was educated at home. To be spared the rigors of boarding school was commonplace for girls of that generation in middle-class English households, and perhaps a formal education would have constricted the flow of her untrammeled fantasies. She, however, felt intellectually deprived. Her father, who was a house master at Harrow, received a steady stream of pupils, "who learned, who profited, who demanded, who endeared themselves by their demands, who were arrayed for the ball while she, her father's Cinderella, went barefoot like the cobbler's child in the adage," she wrote.

While longing for her father's attentions she was at the same time repelled by her mother, who seems to have been immensely resourceful and amusing, but autocratic and demanding. As a young adult, Townsend Warner left home with a small allowance, set herself up in a flat over a furrier's in Bayswater and began to write. An introduction to a publisher, Charles Prentice of Chatto and Windus, led to the publication of her first book of poems. In a letter to Garnett, one of her first friends, Townsend Warner painted a portrait of Prentice which conveys her nervous excitement as well as her pleasure when her work is praised with the comment that "it was unusual to find a woman writing so objectively." She was still at the apparent stage of believing that to be judged unwomanly was the highest form of praise. Rebellion came later perhaps, after falling in love with Valentine Ackland, who lived in the country, wrote poetry and wore pants which, Maxwell writes, "were not commonly found on women at that period. Not in Dorset, anyway." Their union,

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which survived a single serious threat, was uncommonly close. Some impression of its enduring importance can be discerned, although certain conditions not described by Maxwell govern the publication of their love letters, and none are in this book. Valentine, one gathers, crashed about in pants chopping wood and shooting rats with her rifle while Sylvia Townsend Warner, so fastidiously unorthodox, led the life of a traditional countrywoman, bounded by the kitchen, the garden and the parish hall. They made forays into a larger world, as when she and Valentine decided in the 1930s that communism was probably the only effective alternative to fascism.

She wrote, Maxwell comments, like Frau Noah leaning out of a window with a coffee cup in her hand, admiring last night's flood and delicately discovering: the weather, the annual arrival of Gypsies, the opening of a leaf, the ingratitude and bad manners of birds, thunderstorms, swans, fountains, the benefits of singing, cold houses, and. . .the weather. Mr. Fortune, the missionary hero of her second novel, *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, observes at one point that humankind seldom paused to see objects exactly as they were. In common with Berenson, another keenly sensitive observer who repeatedly asked, "Where were my eyes yesterday?" Townsend Warner had the gift of being able to detact nuances of difference that most of us miss. One almost wants to memorize her pointillist responses to the weather. She writes, "This morning when I woke I saw the air between us and the hanging tapestry of trees laced with straight glittering rods of rain, each separate, intentional, like a rain of spears" (p.26) and, "As for the cold — the north-wind is raving, and the air is bruised and black." (p. 23)

"Delirious" is not too strong a word to describe her responses, which adorn page after page. Two dogs wind around her knees "like seaweed." The young daughters of her charwoman listen to her storytelling as raptly as "two owlets." A fat Italian priest in vestments descends from his coach looking like "an overgrown dahlia" and, in one of my favorite passages, she writes, "I wish you could see the two cats, drowsing side by side in a Victorian nursing chair, their paws, their ears, their tails complementally adjusted, their blue eyes blinking open on a single thought of when I shall remember it's their suppertime. They might have been composed by Bach for two flutes." (p.viii) One of the great charms of these letters is the image that evolves of life in the English countryside before the days of lorries, jet planes, superhighways and agricultural machinery. It was a life in which the niceties — books, roaring fires, candlelit dinners in beautiful old rooms — existed in placid harmony with what most Americans would consider pioneering conditions.

To assess such letters for the standard literary merits seems somehow beside the point. They were written to be enjoyed by the dear friends to whom she loyally wrote for decades, and obviously they were enjoyed, since so many of them were kept. One observes, merely, that one finds in these letters an occasional tone of arch, even fey sophistication. Speaking of her missionary hero she writes in 1926, "I love him with a dreadful uneasy passion which in itself denotes him a cripple." (p. 9) Such lapses should not be held against her, since this was too much the accepted coin of exchange, in those prewar years, between clever people being clever. One always kept one's deeper feelings well hidden. Speaking of an old gardener whom she drove home after a stay in hospital, she wrote, "At his own door his pursy gossiping old wife stood waiting. When she saw him the tears rained down her face, her lips trembled, and all she could do was to stammer. . .My darling, my darling. We have always thought them a very stodgy platitudinous couple — and so, I suppose, they are. But having no skill in words, no range of language, they have no figleaves to pin before their feelings." (p. 158) The description, besides being unintentionally self-descriptive, has other revelations to make about the charm of Sylvia Townsend Warner's personality. When Maxwell first met her, her conversation made his head swim, and he did not want to let her out of his sight. One can see why. ■

Meryle Secrest is the author of **Being Bernard Berenson** and **Between Me and Life: A Biography of Romaine Brooks**. Her biography of British art historian Kenneth Clark will soon be published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

A Rebellion Against Time

Just Relations
by Rodney Hall, Viking: King Penguin, 502 pp., $17.75
Reviewed by Bruce Allen

This prodigious and richly entertaining novel—the third by Australian poet Rodney Hall, whose work has not previously appeared in this country — is a career-making book. It's the sort of performance that immediately establishes its author's place among the best writers of his time.

It is the story of a place: Whitey's Fall, a decrepit goldmining town on the southern coast of New South Wales in Australia. Cut into a mountainside, Whitey's Fall consists of forty-nine inhabitants, inbred and eccentric, who are mostly between 89 and 114 years old.

The time is approximately the present day, and most of the "Whitey's Fallers" support themselves by dairy farming. No one can remember the last time a girl child was born, and only a handful of young men remain there as the majority have gone off "for careers. There'd be no youth coming in to take their place." The old people adhere to their old ways, speaking "their peculiar mountain accent, an old language tired and cracked at the joints from too much exposure to wind and sun." They are absorbed in a quasi-religious ritual of communal "Remembering": "You let go and permit yourself to live again, or *still live*, what happened at some other time and place."

Thus equally in tune with the there-and-then and here-and-now, they

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view past, present and future as a simultaneous and seamless continuum. As one of them puts it, " 'History is not a chain of things done, but a continuance of things been'." Or, in another mood, tired of her aging flesh and impatient to become young again: " 'I'm just waiting for the time I can slough off this hideous hulk and start again'."

Indeed, that is how things happen in Whitey's Fall. Temporal and spatial limitations do not always apply; physical laws are sometimes suspended. Miss Bertha McAloon, for instance, discovers that her swimming stroke can be adapted to permit her to fly. The grieving Mum Collins lets drop a tear that continues to expand and expand, terrorizing a roomful of surprised observers. Miss Felicia Brinsmead frequently recalls her intimacies with Julius Caesar — " 'the Italian one, you know' " — and we overhear her receiving some celebrated advice: " 'Now listen here, Miss Felicia,' said George Santayana, 'those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'."

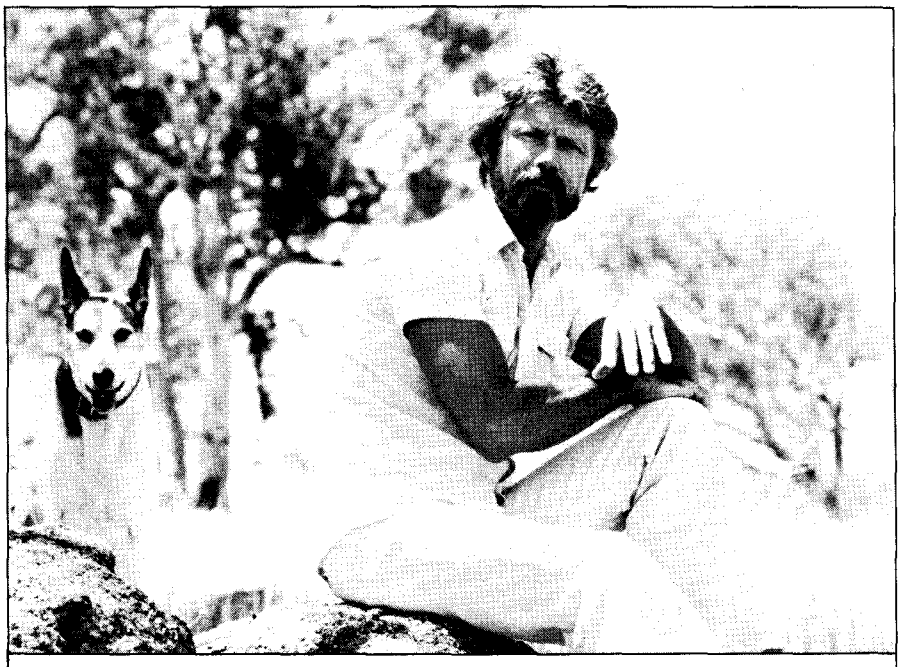
The beneficiaries of such qualities and powers are understandably reluctant to blend wholecloth into the present century. They're proud that "no new buildings had been put up since 1903." They're furious when the Australian Aesthetic and Historical Resources Commission announces plans to "modernize" and restore Whitey's Fall, and the Department of Main Roads proposes to run a new highway through the town. " 'We shall soon be dead, so let the place also fall into ruin'," they chorus. Unheeded, they determine to fight "progress" and "prosperity" with all their remaining strength.

As this crisis takes shape, we are gradually introduced to a host of remarkably vivid characters. The aforementioned Felicia Brinsmead and her older brother Sebastian, storekeepers said to be "mysterious in their ways," are the town's "aristocrats," worldly types who have traveled all over the globe and been "the people's link with what was happening out there." As children, they had discovered a huge seam of gold known in local parlance as "the Golden Fleece." Nobody now knows where it is located. Hidden away in their shop's recesses, a 12-year-old boy named Fido — the product of their incestuous love — frets and chafes in his solitude and dreams of dynamiting the mountain, which symbolizes his confinement, and indeed everybody's.

Nineteen-year-old Billy Swan plots to open up and profit from "the Golden Fleece," but is persuaded that "progress" entails danger and decides it is better to bury the temptation for good. Billy's vacillating motivations are further confused by his love for Vivien Lang, a thirty-ish Englishwoman who has come to Whitey's Fall to live in the house that belonged to her beloved great-aunt Annie — who was loved and let go by Billy's 90-year-old grandfather Arthur Swan (everyone calls him "Uncle"). This is how Hall's intricate network of characterizations is arranged: as we learn about one local personage, tales of his or her affiliations and affections lead us to the next and the next, and so on. I do not think it is possible to be certain how all the novel's Swans, Langs, McAloons, McTaggarts, Collinses, and others are interrelated and will give just one further example of the relevant bafflements: Bertha McAloon, the octogenarian nymphomaniac possessed by erotic memories and imaginings, was once Uncle's wife. Now Uncle has named his dog Bertha — and the reader is invited, and dared, to keep all these entanglements sorted out.

The novel's plot consists of colliding, intersecting present experiences and remembered past ones, from the viewpoints of several involved characters and of the omniscient author. The events arrange themselves into three major sequences, or "waves." In the first we see relationships throughout Whitey's Fall sharpened and clarified by the threat of newness and reform, the coming of Vivien Lang, the search for gold undertaken by Billy Swan and his mates and — an action that casts a long shadow over all subsequent events — the accidental death of the Chinese schoolmistress Mercy Ping.

The next long section describes the drastic results of Billy's explorations; the awkward progression toward self-discovery that engulfs his cousin and best friend Tong McTaggart; the citizens' defiant, paramilitary "rebellion" against the invading "road machines," and a climactic confrontation between "crown flunkeys" and belligerent locals. In the third section, finally, after news of a new gold strike brings the world



Rodney Hall: leading a rebellion against creeping blandness.

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rushing into Whitey's Fall, we follow its people's "exodus" to the interior to reclaim their old way of life, just as the Australian government and the international economy seem on the verge of collapse.

These extravagant matters stimulate a partial stylistic resort to hyperbole, surrealism, and fantasy. We hear of "giant grasshoppers and murders on the gold-field," that "lizards as long as a mineshaft terrorize the dogs, butterflies grow strong enough to carry off the beads of gold." The dead frequently show up among the living; buildings and other inanimate objects join in the novel's vigorous conversations: the Brinsmeads' shop is a chronic complainer; the cauliflowers in Uncle's garden chat with their caretaker; we are treated to throwaway lines such as "the olives had a few tart things to say," and so on.

Hall's descriptions, never less than vividly lyrical, reveal a writer who really sees what he's showing us: "The rain peppered down, sharp drops knocking a passage between the leaves. Behind them the forest reared smooth trunks washed dark green by rain streaming down them to form puffs of white foam at the bottom." Elsewhere, the simplicity of his prose carries great emotional force; describing the agony felt by tradition-bound parents who cannot make themselves beg their offended son not to leave home, he writes that "the dark blood of the dead weighed them down."

It seems ungrateful, given all these riches, to mention the novel's weaknesses. But a few of the characters and the subplots they generate strike me as walking literary ideas, rather than fully formed persons and situations. Rupert Ping, widower of the unfortunate Mercy, absorbed in deranged conversations before the mirror with "the man inside him," exemplifies a solipsism and self-regard for which he is crudely punished. The unacknowledged Fido Brinsmead, scuttling about in dark corners and penning pathetic letters to strangers — " 'I love you. Do you love me?' " — is kept "offstage" all too successfully: we never fully believe he is real.

Hall gets some effective low comedy out of the misadventures suffered by the visiting Senator Halloran, charged with convincing Whitey's Fall to enter the modern age. This unwelcome "devil" is accompanied everywhere by a large, awkwardly affectionate black dog; but the character is too calculatedly buffoonish, too far out of key with his context. And even the most politically radical readers will likely feel that Hall lets the "protest" speeches and scenes go on too long, that his characters' expressions of "the age-old struggle against authority, the refusal to knuckle under" are hammered out a few too many times.

Not that *Just Relations* is exclusively, as one Australian reviewer has called it, "a requiem for the passing of the old rural Australia." The novel's ending does bring news that suggests a worldwide rebellion against the kind of creeping blandness which Whitey's Fall resists; surely we are meant to see a new beginning in the villagers' heroic retreat inland, and a new Adam and Eve in the mutually devoted Billy and Vivien. We're urged to take seriously Sebastian's concluding assertion that his and Felicia's searches throughout the world for "a better society" than Whitey's Fall had always proved futile, always brought them back to the land of their origins.

Still, there's ample evidence that the truculent insularity of this ageless microcosm is not altogether a good thing. The town *is* "dying," *does* force its young men to go elsewhere to better themselves.

The ambiguity testifies to the breadth of Hall's vision. There is a remarkable amplitude in this book, an extraordinary sense of how all these people impinge on one another's lives, and enter one another's consciousnesses. As "just relations," they are themselves, one another, all their ancestors and predecessors, and all those yet to be born. ■

LBJ: Succumbing to the Allure of Power

The Path to Power: Volume One of The Years of Lyndon Johnson
by Robert A. Caro, Alfred A. Knopf, 882 pp., $19.95
Reviewed by Robert R. Harris

In Washington, D.C., at the end of a popular late-night political talk show, the hosts were in the habit of asking their guests, often old Washington hands, whom they thought of as the most unforgettable character they had ever met in politics. The answer invariably was Lyndon Johnson. *The Path to Power* helps to explain why so many have been so intrigued by this wily, complex man.

Robert A. Caro, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (1974), spent seven years researching and writing this long, controversial, highly opinionated, exhaustively documented and magisterial book, the first of three projected volumes of *The Years of Lyndon Johnson*. Caro lets the reader know his view of Johnson from the outset. Johnson, he writes, had a hunger for power "so fierce and consuming that no consideration of morality or ethics, no cost to himself—or to anyone else—could stand before it." And in achieving that power Johnson, writes Caro, displayed "an utter ruthlessness in destroying obstacles. . .and a seemingly bottomless capacity for deceit, deception and betrayal."

Such a harsh judgment was bound to stir up trouble. And the controversy over *The Path to Power* began more than a year ago when *The Atlantic* published the first of five ex-

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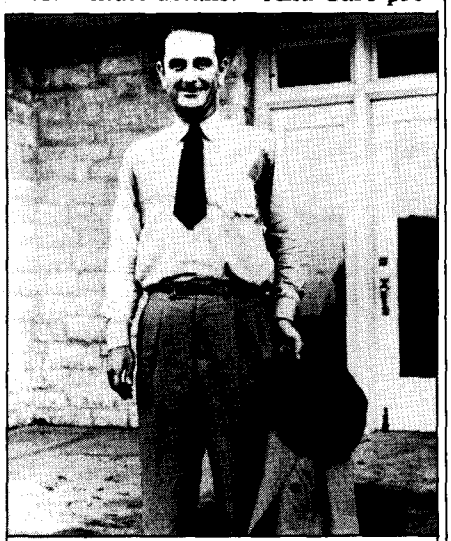
cerpts from the book. In that excerpt Caro wrote, "For years, men came into Lyndon Johnson's office and handed him envelopes stuffed with cash. They didn't stop coming even when the office in which he sat was the office of the Vice President." The charge made headlines nationwide and was disputed by Johnson's colleagues. In the finished version of the book Caro deleted the portion dealing with the cash-flow through the Vice President's office. He has explained that since this first volume of the biography covers Johnson's early life through 1941 when he was 32, the documentation for the charge about Johnson's conduct as Vice President would appear in the second volume, due to be completed in two or three years.

But Caro does delve into events that occurred *after* 1941. He charges that although Johnson said that he placed all his business affairs in a blind trust during his tenure as President, he, in fact, "personally directed" those affairs "down to the most minute details." And Caro provides a full page of documentation on this point. So if the author documents incidents that happened while LBJ was President in this first volume, why not make public now the documentation regarding his activities as Vice President? The fact remains, however, that everything that did get into the completed book is amply documented in more than sixty pages of fascinating, small-print, double-column notes.



The young Lyndon Johnson.

Caro searched long and hard to discover the reasons behind Johnson's rise to power. He soon learned that the answer was certainly not to be found in Johnson's legislative record. "During his more than eleven years in the House of Representatives," Caro reports, "he introduced only five bills that would affect the country as a whole." Caro then turned to influential New Deal insiders, and Thomas ("Tommy the Cork") Corcoran told him that the key to Johnson's rising influence was money. But Corcoran warned that proof would not be found in writing. Caro found it.

In Johnson's office records stored in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum in Austin, Caro discovered lists of requests for campaign funds from congressional candidates and, in the margins in Johnson's handwriting, notations on how much was to be doled out to, or denied, each candidate. Johnson had maneuvered his way onto the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, had solicited large (for the time) sums of Texas oil money, and had put it to effective use helping Democratic congressional aspirants. "At the beginning of October, 1940," Caro writes, "Johnson was merely a junior Congressman, a rather unpopular one at that, with neither power nor influence on Capitol Hill. . . . By Election Day, 1940, just a month later, Lyndon Johnson was a Congressman with considerable influence—as a colleague put it, 'a guy you couldn't deny any more'."

Winning was all-important to Johnson. Caro portrays him as willing to court, use, and turn against just about anybody—from his own father to the President. Johnson relied on his father, who served six terms in the Texas state legislature, for astute political advice early on, then later denounced him as a drunk. Johnson became a "professional son" to Sam Rayburn, then during the 1940 presidential campaign worked behind Rayburn's back to become Roosevelt's "man in Texas." Johnson won his 1937 bid for Congress by proclaiming avid support for FDR, all the while making it perfectly clear to his moneyed backers that he abhorred the New Deal.

He stole his first election at Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos. Later he had pages containing unflattering references cut out of copies of his college yearbook. As a congressional aide to Richard Kleberg, Johnson sat, Caro writes, "in a San Antonio hotel room buying votes with five-dollar bills." Johnson stole another election to become the leader of the Little Congress, a debating group for congressional aides. He lost his 1941 bid for a Senate seat in a special election because of an uncharacteristic lapse—he allowed his opponents to buy more votes than he did.

The Path to Power, however, is much more than an unrelenting catalog of deception and political chicanery. Caro has interspersed brilliant set pieces and asides: a perceptive account of how the infertile, eroding land of Texas Hill Country worked to defeat the people who lived there, including Johnson's family, and how that experience helped to shape Johnson; a chapter-long biography of Sam Rayburn; a brief history of Populism in America; a disquisition on the inner workings of Texas state politics. The best of these digressions is a *tour de force* stretch of narrative in which Caro, relying on research conducted by his wife, describes the bleak existence of Texas Hill folk—endlessly hauling water and wood for cooking and laundering—and demonstrates what electrification, achieved through the efforts of Lyndon Johnson, meant to them.

And Caro offers other glimpses of the good that Johnson was capable of. He was a devoted high school teacher at the "Mexican school" in Cotulla. As a congressional aide he worked hard for his boss's constituents, cutting red tape and securing pensions and farm mortgages. He was a tireless campaigner for Congress in 1937, driving to the most remote sections of his district and perfecting the soon-to-be-famous "Johnson treatment," consisting of handshake, back slap, and hug. That Johnson did much of this to enhance

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his own power is beyond question, but there is no doubt that in the process he helped many. Tommy Corcoran, who was in a position to know, called Johnson "the best Congressman for a district that *ever* was."

So the Lyndon Johnson who emerges from this sweeping, formidable biography is ultimately a contradiction. He lusted for power, obsessively lied, betrayed friends, amassed a personal fortune while in public office, abused and humiliated those who worked for him, granted favors to those who backed him financially, refused to stand up for principle. Yet he helped many, commanded respect and loyalty and, finally, went on to achieve his dream and become President. The man's story, the complexity of which matches that of his personality, was to end in tragedy, as the promise of the Great Society was swallowed up in the quagmire of Vietnam. ■

Book Briefs

The Breaks
by Richard Price
Simon & Schuster, 446 pp., $15.95

For starters, Pete Keller doesn't get into Columbia Law School while his best friend, Bam-Bam, whizzes in with bad grades and good connections. The worst thing Keller can imagine is being like his whipped father, a "Federal Philatelist's Agent," as in his embarrassment he used to call him. But after a stint selling Power Plower ("the complete iso-tensile body-builder in a bar"), he ends up on a post office stool sorting mail. Next thing he knows he's dialing bomb threats to the Capri Room of Paradise Caterers and Ricky's Clam House, signing off "Viva Che!" and "Free the Indianapolis 500." Barely able to free himself after these stunts, he hightails it to his old college town where he hooks up with folks who put these mild shenanigans in the shade: pretty Kimberly, who warns him that the last man she slept with got the electric chair — "I was the Angel of Death" — and Tony Fonseca, who "was simply born to torture."

A sort of East-Coast, ethnic-style *The Graduate*, *The Breaks* is a classic search-for-identity novel. The characters may run to the histrionic, but the mundane world is rendered in prose so vivid it pops, from Julia Childs' "loopy tea-time voice" and trousers "belted up two inches from the breastbone like who cares anymore," to "despair-colored" walls. In the ordinary, Price truly finds glory — and in the grotesque hidden in the ordinary, he finds humor. Despite legal aspirations and a psyche that can get him arrested, Keller has a "standing daydream of being a comic." If he is not a great stand-up by story's end, his author has still proven himself a master, standing up, sitting down, hands down. —ANNA SHAPIRO

Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography
by Sue Davidson Lowe
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $25.50

As a renowned photographer, art dealer, publisher and sage, Alfred Stieglitz played a monumental role in the development of modern art in America. His stunning achievements with a camera elevated photography to fine art, paving the way for young proteges Edward Steichen and Paul Strand. Stieglitz's galleries — 291, The Intimate Gallery, and An American Place — were among the first American showcases for European modern painters including Picasso, Rousseau, Braque, and Grosz. While providing a permanent base for American modernists Arthur Dove, John Marin and, later, Georgia O'Keeffe, the galleries also served as a forum for Stieglitz's fervent discourses on such favorite themes as quality and truth in art, his abhorrence of materialism, and his passionate belief that artistic pursuit must be independent of the desire for profit or popular acceptance.

Sue Davidson Lowe, Stieglitz's grandniece, thoughtfully counterbalances these descriptions of his public attitudes and accomplishments with her own reminiscences of his annual summer visits to the family's Lake George retreat. She reveals how Stieglitz's apparent disdain for his family masked a deep dependency, both financial and emotional, that manifested iteself in lifelong hypochondria and immobilizing depressions. These insights evince the major contradictions in Stieglitz's character: his adventurous thinking coupled with a profound traditionalism; the simultaneous need for solitude and an attentive coterie; and a staunch integrity at odds with his robust egoism. With affection and intelligence, Lowe humanizes Stieglitz's mythic character, adding an important dimension to the understanding of this complex and eloquent man. —CAROL VERDERESE

Sara & Gerald
by Honoria Murphy Donnelly and Richard N. Billings
Times Books, 242 pp., $17.95

Sara and Gerald Murphy, often believed to have led a charmed life because of their wealth, brilliant literary friends, and cultural activities, actually had a rather sad and insular existence. At least this is the conclusion one draws after reading this plodding memoir. Though it can be inferred that their daughter, who co-authored this book, intended to characterize her parents as more than well-meaning dilettantes, she has not succeeded. Little is provided to suggest that the Murphys were concerned with anything outside their privileged private world.

While living in Paris in the 1920s they showed no interest in international affairs, economic or political developments at home, or even — which is most amazing — a passing regard for the Bolshevik Revolution. Though Gerald always complained that Fitzgerald misunderstood the Murphys in calling them the "idle rich," it is difficult to take this seriously when, only pages later, a point is made of Sara having once banned Fitzgerald from their house after he broke three of her favorite champagne glasses. Except for the anguishing early deaths of both the Murphy's sons, their crises — a lawsuit with Sara's sister; having to sell their boat when their

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capital slips below a quarter of a million; a merger in the family business — hardly seem the stuff of high tragedy. This dearth of drama is compounded by the structure of the book. As characters, the Murphys remain flat and shadowy until the end, when the reader can finally hear their voices through correspondence with Hemingway, the MacLeishes, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos and others.

In a letter to Hemingway, Sara once wrote: "You are something living in a dead or dying world, to hold to." The Murphys were sensitive people; yet their only accomplishment was to know people of accomplishment. —ANDREA BARNET

Difficult Women
by David Plante
Atheneum, 192 pp., $9.95

Had Plante remained aloof, purely the narrator of this startling memoir of three difficult women — Jean Rhys, Sonia Orwell and Germaine Greer — the intimacy of some of his details would have at moments been compromising; he would have been guilty of voyeurism. However, because he is unflinchingly candid about his own uncertain role in each of these relationships, a role that is completely passive, potentially parasitic and insecure, he does not exempt himself from the critical scrutiny to which he subjects his three friends. Instead he includes himself as a character, recreating several boozy London winters spent assisting Rhys in the completion of her autobiography, a tense two-week holiday with Orwell in Italy, and a road trip to New Mexico with Greer. Even in the most indecorous moments — pulling Rhys, drunk, out of the toilet after she has fallen in; watching Greer chop up testicle for her cat; enduring Orwell as she victimizes an innocent dinner guest — he refrains from waving a self-righteous finger. Instead he questions his own motivations in spending so much time with these three mercurial women: Is it cheap literary curiosity, he asks? Guilt for some breach in the past? Escape from himself?

All this could be terribly self-indulgent and circular, but it is not. This is because Plante raises these psychological portraits to the narrative pitch of fiction. He brings each to life with a dramatic precision that is formidable. —ANDREA BARNET

The Only Living Witness
by Stephen G. Michaud and Hugh Aynesworth
The Linden Press/Simon & Schuster, 464 pages, $15.95

In the summer of 1979 Theodore Robert Bundy was given the death penalty for the brutal slaying of two Florida co-eds. For Bundy, these sorority house killings were the culmination of a four-year murder rampage which left at least twenty women dead and many more physically and psychologically maimed. The sensational trial was widely publicized, spawning a Bundy "mystique" which has been the subject of four books and numerous articles, all trying to grasp the essential nature of "a depravity off the scale of human understanding."

Stephen Michaud and Hugh Aynesworth have come closest to penetrating the enigma of Ted Bundy through first-rate investigative reporting and by enlisting the mass-murderer to "speculate" on the methods and motivations of the psychopathic killer. What unfolds is Bundy's third-person account of his own experience, including a preoccupation with violent pornography and voyeurism, his disdain for authority, a chilling description of his "hunts" for victims, and his complete lack of remorse after their "possession," Bundy's euphemism for murder.

Bundy's astounding ability to rationalize his behavior enabled him to maintain a mask of respectability so convincing that friends and acquaintances continued to vouch for his innocence in spite of the overwhelming evidence against him; the police dismissed him as a suspect repeatedly before Bundy virtually invited them to apprehend him. The authors emphasize that this is the most terrifying aspect of his story, that society "is essentially defenseless against the intelligent, dedicated killer."

They have written with gut-wrenching immediacy and yet readily admit they can "only say what it was like, not what it was." Though the unspeakable "entity" inhabiting Ted Bundy's body has revealed itself, it remains unknowable, disturbing, and bizarrely fascinating.
—CAROL VERDERESE

Lost Honor
by John Dean
Stratford Press, 360 pp., $15.95

John Dean appears on the cover as the eternal preppie: a man who has passed the bar, worked at the White House, been sent up the river and *still* wears his sweater with the sleeves tied around the front of his neck. But Dean has learned a lot since law school; he has learned about regaining honor by somberly examining his guilt in public and about dropping the tastiest plum he has to offer (in this case, the possible identity of Deep Throat) in a book's early chapter and picking it back up again in the last 90 pages.

By now everyone knows Dean's research has led him to the conclusion that Alexander M. Haig, Jr. was Bob Woodward's main man. Inconclusive? Yes. Frivolous? Perhaps. But this is the book's most interesting section and the only part where Dean's style becomes something other than lumbering and self-conscious.

Lost Honor contains less factual documentation and more personal reflection than did *Blind Ambition*, and its *raison d'etre* is more shady. If you like John Dean, if you find his personality fascinating—apart from the unique role it played in Watergate—then you might enjoy *Lost Honor*. If not, you'll probably be bored or even uncomfortable when you share John's first marijuana cigarette and his subsequent revelations about how the toaster far exceeds the waffle iron for raw ingenuity.

Dean—along with other ex-colleagues—has been attacked for profiting monetarily from his involvement in scandal. But those are the rules of the game; as long as the public's interest holds, these men will go on lecturing and debating and writing. And it can only be healthy for us to learn the innermost thoughts

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of those whose actions were not so long ago shrouded in the secrecy of "national security." Isn't it fun to see G. Gordon Liddy on "Late Night With David Letterman"? But for the many who find this trend annoying, it should be comforting to know that John Dean almost certainly does not have a third Watergate book up his sleeve.

—LAURIE WINER

5001 Nights at the Movies
by Pauline Kael
Holt Rinehart Winston, 676 pp., $25

It has been said that Pauline Kael is more fun to read than most of the movies she reviews are to watch. I don't think she would approve of that sentiment, which seems somehow beside the point. But her writing is always evocative and supremely witty. She can conjure up an image she's seen on the screen with as much skill as the filmmaker who put it there. She can examine a performance with a satirist's eye, bringing out the ridiculous lying just under the surface. If you've ever seen Nicol Williamson's Hamlet, then you'll appreciate her sentence, "He stares so much that he's in danger of wearing out his eyeballs." Her tastes and appetites are wide-ranging. She favors no one genre over another; if it's well done she can celebrate any type of film. (Some of her critics belittle this anti-elitism and claim that her tastes are bizarre.) She is never intimidated by the cinema's sacred cows, so that Bergman's *Autumn Sonata* is "grueling and unconvincing" and Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* is "a look at a mousy wife's fantasy life; her unconscious seems to be stuffed with leftover decor from M-G-M musicals."

But when Kael loves a film, as she unapologetically did Brian DePalma's *Blow Out*, she sings its praises so joyfully that one feels uplifted simply by her pleasure. Her writing is visceral and specific, yet it also has a casual just-hanging-around-talking-about-movies pace, which leaves room for her sharp-edged humor to wind up and find its target. She is a champion of the immediate and innovative and true, and she is repulsed by pomposity above all else. More than any other reviewer, she is misread, dumped on and adored, but her writing does exactly what popular criticism should do: It incites people to think and to argue about what movies make them feel. Even those who say they can't stand her go on reading her year after year in *The New Yorker*.

These reviews, most of them pared down from longer ones, appeared originally in *The New Yorker* and cover films from the 1920s to the 1980s. Because they are short and because there are a goodly number of them, this book can and probably will be used as a reference text. But it compares to other reference texts (such as the committee-written *Oxford Companion to Film*) as *The Gold Rush* compares to an industrial film on mining.

—LAURIE WINER

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EZED OUT OF
EXISTENCE.
He's an imaginary playmate to children everywhere. But in the real world, scientists are struggling to save his life, his home, and his future. Watch *Save the Panda*, a new National Geographic Special on PBS. It's television to warm your heart. And open your eyes. The kind of television Gulf believes in.
Produced by the National Geographic Society and WQED/Pittsburgh. Underwritten for the eighth year by Gulf.
Watch SAVE THE PANDA, March 9, at 8 p.m. EST on PBS. Check local listings.
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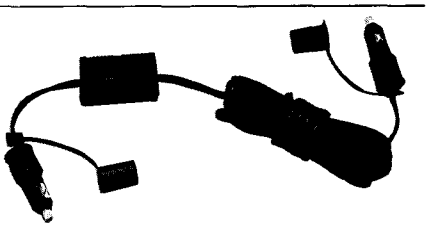
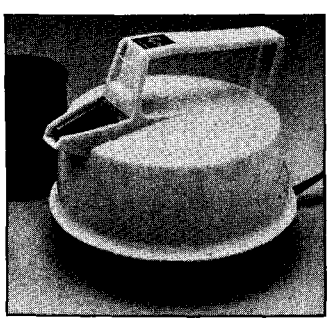
Attract Dust Like A Magnet

If we ever compile a book on *The Old Ways That Were Better Ways,* we will certainly include a chapter on the lambswool duster. This remarkable implement originated, the best we can tell, in 19th-century England where it quickly put the feather-duster to shame. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. When soiled, just wash it in warm soapy water. We are happy to offer a 20" long authentic lambswool duster for **$8.00** ($1.95) #A163.

Beyond Jumper Cables



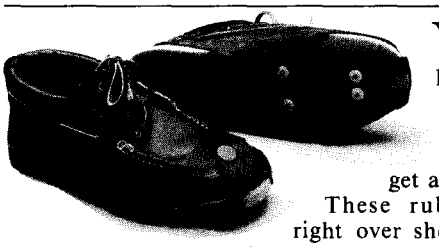
Your car battery is dead. How would you like to recharge the battery and start the car *without ever even opening the hood?* Sound impossible? It's not, thanks to the Easy Charge, which takes the old idea of jumper cables and refines it to a new level of ease, convenience and safety. With traditional jumper cables you have to maneuver a second car fender-to-fender with the disabled car, open both hoods, and attach leads from battery to battery. The Easy Charge simplifies this process brilliantly by substituting connection from cigarette lighter to cigarette lighter. You just plug one end of the Easy Charge into the lighter of a running car, pass the 16′ cord through both car windows and insert the other end in the lighter of the disabled car. A trickle charge immediately starts flowing into the dead battery. After a few minutes' wait the battery is recharged sufficiently to restart the car. The Easy Charge is small enough to fit in the glove compartment. **$20.00** ($2.95) #A629.



Electric Mini-Kettle

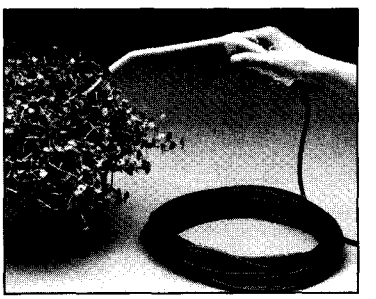
How many times a day do you boil two or three (or more!) times as much water as you actually need? Because of the way our kitchen pots are designed, we usually indulge in overkill — wasting money (for the energy to heat all that unused water) and time (the more you heat, the longer it takes to boil). At last someone has had the good sense to design a kettle for boiling small amounts of water, from a tablespoon or so (in seconds) to a maximum 4 cups (in a little over 4 minutes). The UL listed mini-kettle is metal below, plastic above with a steam guard and a cord just under 3′ long. The non-stick inner surfaces discourage mineral build-up. It's backed by a two-year limited warranty. **$24.00** ($2.95) #A603.

Slip-On Spikes

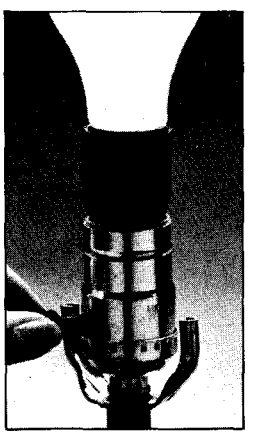


With ice underfoot walking is no longer a mere habit but a reckless challenge to the law of gravity. But there is a way to get a grip on the situation. These rubber harnesses slip right over shoes or boots and put four tungsten-carbide-tipped spikes between you and the ice. The spikes are portable enough to fit easily in a coat pocket or bag and slip on in seconds. Order size small #A633 for shoe sizes up to 8, medium #A634 for 8½-11 and large #A635 for 11½ and over. If you plan to wear the spikes over heavy boots, order the next larger size. The slip-on spikes cost **$16.00** ($2.95) a pair.

Watering Whiz



Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There is an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. This 50′ vinyl hose comes complete with a set of four adaptors that readily attach to most indoor and outdoor faucets. From there you just take the water where you want it — an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off as needed. This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health as well as its beauty. **$11.00** ($1.95) #A681.



Convert-A-Bulb

How would you like to save more than $15 per fixture when you next change a 3-way lightbulb? Three-way bulbs have some major shortcomings. They are noticeably more expensive than regular bulbs, they come in a limited range of sizes and styles, and the high setting on a 3-way bulb gives you significantly less light than you are entitled to expect. A plain 100-watt bulb gives 1740 lumens of light; a 30-70-100 watt 3-way at the highest setting gives only 1285 lumens. The Convert-A-Bulb screws into your 3-way fixture and enables you to have 3-way action from a regular lightbulb. It accepts any standard base bulb from 7½ to 150 watts. Let's assume that you replace a 50-100-150 watt 3-way bulb with a regular 150-watt bulb. Because of the lumen differential between regular and 3-way bulbs, the medium setting gives the same amount of light that you formerly had at the high setting — providing a savings of 27 watts per hour. The regular bulb at medium setting will last 6 times its rated life of 750 hours, or a total of 4500 hours. If you pay 7¢ per kwh for electricity the savings amount to $8.50. Plus, 3-way bulbs are usually rated at 1200 hours, so you would need four of them at $2.20 each, to outlast this one regular bulb, at $1.50. That is another $7.30 in savings for an overall windfall of $15.80 over the life of the first bulb alone! The Convert-A-Bulb is UL listed and available *exclusively from us.* Buy one for **$10.00** ($1.95) #A495, two for **$18.00** ($1.95) #A496 or three for **$26.00** ($2.95) #A497.

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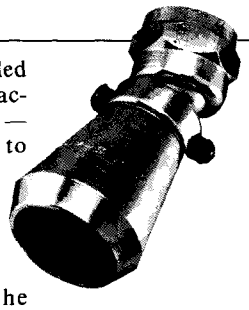
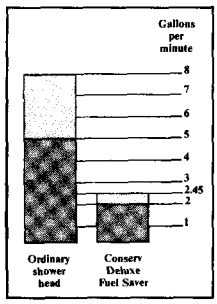
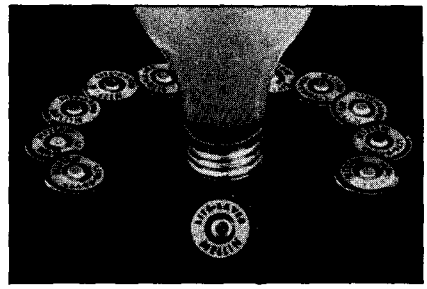
Savings In The Shower



This finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver, manufactured by Con-Serv, cuts the use of water — hot water — in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gallons of water — much of it heated — everyday. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of between $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated — utilizing the Venturi principle — for an invigorating shower. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily over the standard ½" shower arm with pliers or a wrench — no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for **$16.00** ($2.95) #A351.

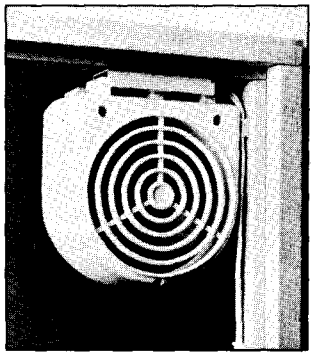


Lite Savers

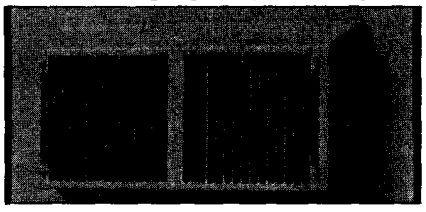


If you're tired of climbing ladders and getting into precarious (often dangerous) positions to change an out of the way light bulb then you should know about Mellin Lite-Savers. Adhered to the base of any *one way* bulb the Lite-Savers can extend bulb life from 50 to 100 times! Just think of the money saved in light bulbs! Most bulbs have a rated life of 750 hours or 32 days if used continuously. With Lite Savers your bulbs will burn up to 75,000 hours or about eight years if used 24 hours a day. They're ideal for hallways, staircases, or anyplace where replacing light bulbs is a time consuming nuisance. You'll notice that Lite-Savers reduce light output so you may want to increase bulb wattage. They're safe, dependable and install quickly and easily with any one way bulb. The manufacturer offers a limited eight year warranty. We offer the Lite-Savers in a package of 6 for **$17.00** ($1.95) #A548 or 12 for **$27.00** ($2.95) #A549 or 24 for **$49.00** ($3.95) #A642.

Improve Your Circulation

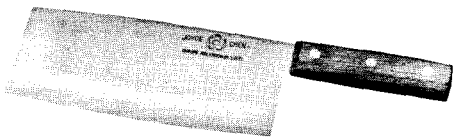


Good air circulation throughout your home means increased comfort, heating efficiency and uniform temperature. But every home has its problems, whether it's high ceilings, unusually large rooms or later additions. Here are two excellent ways to help *direct* the air and *balance* the temperature. The **room-to-room temperature balancing fan** (shown at left) mounts high in the frame of a doorway (doors can still be closed) where it recirculates warm air down into the room. The ConServ fan has a 110 volt motor with a 10 foot cord and an in-line switch. It weighs just 2 lb. 3 oz. and measures 5½" x 5" x 3½". **$28.00** ($3.95) #A397. The **register fan** (shown below) fits right in the register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out into the room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatically as the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which means you can use it in the summer to move the cool air off the floor and up into the room). The booster fan (actually it is two small 4" fans running together) fits all registers up to 6" x 14" and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9' of cord and costs **$40.00** ($3.95) #A536. You may buy both fans together for the special price of **$60.00** ($6.95) #A667.



Scissor And Slice

Joyce Chen has built an outstanding reputation for Chinese kitchenware that is beautifully designed and expertly made of best quality materials. The Chen scissors and knife will quickly become a mainstay of your kitchen even if you never serve a Chinese dish. The large handles and short blades of the scissors give great leverage and pinpoint control, fit right or lefthanded persons equally well, and are plenty strong enough to cut through small bones, shells and the like. The Chinese knife (often mistakenly called a cleaver) is a marvelously well-balanced implement whose weight does most of the work for you, whether chopping, slicing, shredding, mincing, crushing or even filleting. The knife blade is made of chrome molybdenum steel with a hardwood handle riveted to a full tang. The scissor blades are chrome finished high carbon tool steel with flexible plastic handles. With these implements alone, plus a few ingredients, you can turn a plain old chicken into Fung Wong Gai (Phoenix Emperor Chicken). The Joyce Chen scissors cost **$13.00** ($1.95) #A411. The Chinese knife is **$27.00** ($2.95) #A410.



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Previews

Farewell to CBS Cable

Saturday Review generally does not include obituaries, but some mention must be made of the passing of CBS Cable this past December. Founded in October of 1981, it was a major force in cultural television, with consistently high-quality programming.

But, as everyone knows, it costs money to produce quality programs, and wherever the blame is laid—a lack of advertisers, a lack of proper budgeting, a lack of commitment from the parent, CBS—the money ran out for CBS Cable. So it is especially important at this moment to reaffirm that there is an audience for cultural programming. Television has proven that it can be more than the "half-vast wasteland" of soaps and sitcoms. Why should it be less? Below, a look at some upcoming highlights.

Ludwig Live

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony
PBS, February 2, 8:00 PM.

The turmoil of the second half of Ludwig van Beethoven's life is by now a legend. His moodiness, his feuds with friends, his tempestuous love affairs that never ended well, the years of lawsuits to gain custody of his nephew Karl and the worry and grief that nephew caused him, the financial difficulties because of mishandled funds, his frequent bouts of illness and, of course, his growing deafness — all plagued Beethoven's life, and drastically reduced his output during the mid-1810s. But by 1817, when his deafness was complete, Beethoven had a final burst of creativity and, many critics believe, accomplished the most intricate and substantial work of his career. During this period, Beethoven brought forth five piano sonatas, including the *Hammerklavier* (Op. 106), five string quartets, and his last symphony, the Ninth.

That Ninth Symphony (Op. 125, in D Minor) was a massive undertaking, complete with a choral finale based on Schiller's "Ode to Joy" (which had intrigued Beethoven from his early 20s). Written over six years (1817-1823), it had its debut on May 7, 1824, at Vienna's Karnthnerthor Theatre. If Beethoven is considered the last of the classical composers and the first of the Romantics, then the Ninth Symphony was surely a work that pointed the way toward the Romantic Movement, with its monumental scale and soaring emotion.

Live from Lincoln Center presents Beethoven's Ninth this February 2, with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. Joining the Philharmonic will be the New York Choral Artists, under Joseph Flummerfelt, and an accomplished group of soloists: soprano Montserrat Caballe, mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, tenor Jon Vickers, and baritone Matti Salminen.

The Winds of Wouk

The Winds of War
ABC, February 6, 7, 11, 13, 8:00 PM.
February 8, 9, 10, 9:00 PM.

Like *Shogun, Masada*, or *Roots, The Winds of War* is one of those mega-productions that one speaks of more readily in terms of numbers than adjectives — a script of 962 pages, 285 speaking parts, a budget of over $35 million (apparently surpassing *Marco Polo* as the most expensive TV feature), and more than 400 sites, including Zagreb, Vienna, Rome, London, Munich, Florence, Milan, and Venice. Eighteen hours from start to finish, the program is the longest consecutively running mini-series ever. It airs over seven nights, in an almost Dickensian serialization, and tells the story of Victor Henry, a career naval officer, and his family. Set in the early days of World War II, *The Winds of War* encompasses the spread of fascism, the first aggressions of Nazi Germany, the plight of Eastern European Jews, the battles in France and England and eventually, with Pearl Harbor, the entry of the United States into the war. As Henry deals with the outbreak of war on the highest diplomatic level, his sons are caught up in the day-to-day brutalities.

For the novel's author, Herman Wouk, writer of several bestsellers

John Houseman in "Winds."

and the winner of a Pulitzer Prize for the 1951 *Caine Mutiny*, the ABC production marks a debut — the adaptation of his 1971 book is his first screenplay for either film or television. Starring as Victor Henry, Robert Mitchum, veteran of almost 100 screen roles, also finds himself in his first TV appearance. He is joined by a cast that includes Ali Macgraw, Polly Bergen, Jan-Michael Vincent, David Dukes, and John Houseman, under director Dan Curtis. Produc-

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tions like this one seem to call for descriptions such as opulent, sweeping and, yes, even epic, but it's better to avoid hyperbole and just note that *The Winds of War* is a pretty good story, and while it could be shorter it will probably hold audience interest over its full 18 hours, which in itself is no mean feat.

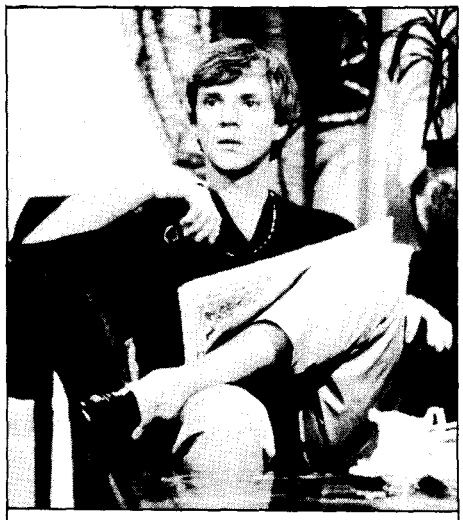
Comedy of Menace

The Collection
ARTS, February 15, 9:00 PM.

Harold Pinter wrote his first play specifically for television *(Night School)* in 1960, three years into his career, and almost immediately detested the work: "It so happens this was the worst thing I've written." But he wasn't completely dissuaded from television, and the next year he brought out *The Collection*. Like many of the British dramatist's works, *The Collection* is a play in which very little happens — which is especially striking on TV, with its predilection for whiz-bang action —yet from the opening scene, it is charged with an unrelenting tension. It can be termed a "comedy of menace," a play of mysterious silences, incomprehensible actions, and subtly veiled threats.

The Collection concerns two couples: James and Stella, a husband and wife, and Harry and Bill, a protector and protege, possibly although not necessarily homosexual lovers. Opening on a 4 AM phone call from a man who refuses to leave his name, the play sketches the tensions in both relationships, and moves into gear as James barges in on Bill and accuses him of an affair with Stella. The dialogue is by turns absurdly comic and dangerous, and since a good deal of it is lies anyway, the truth never becomes clear.

Winner of the International Emmy in 1977, director Michael Apted's *The Collection* treats ARTS viewers to a truly impressive cast — Laurence Olivier as Harry, Alan Bates as James, Malcolm McDowell as Bill, and Helen Mirren as Stella. The interplay between Bates as the threatening James and McDowell as the wisecracking Bill is both hilarious and terrifying, and really some of the finest acting to be seen on television.



Malcolm McDowell as Bill.

17th Century Scandal

The School for Wives
TeleFrance, February 26, 9:30 PM.

No other play brought so much money to Moliere and his troupe of actors than his *L'Ecole des Femmes (The School for Wives)*, first presented at the Palais-Royal on December 26, 1662. But that success was costly, for it touched off a heated public debate about Moliere's work and set a cloud of controversy over his subsequent plays. The story of Arnolphe, a middle-aged man who fears being cuckolded above all else; Agnes, a young girl he has raised to be his wife, sheltered from the world; and Horace, a gallant, whose arrival upsets the best-laid of plans, *The School for Wives* was attacked by critics as poorly constructed, trivial, common, obscene and, most dangerous of all for Moliere, anti-religious. Numerous lesser-known critics joined the fray, slashing Moliere's ability both as an actor and a playwright, but the major negative voice belonged to the neo-classical dramatist Corneille. It was finally the King who, with a large gift and a pension to Moliere, silenced the criticisms.

This month, TeleFrance presents *The School for Wives* with actors drawn from the Comedie Francaise. If all the seventeenth-century fuss seems a little excessive to a modern audience, the stinging satire of pomposity and male chauvinism will strike a responsive note. Raymond Rouleau directs, and comic veteran

PHOTO: ORTF

Isabelle Adjani (right).

Bernard Blier (father of Oscar-winning director Bertrand) stars as Arnolphe in this 1973 production. Of interest is the video debut of Isabelle Adjani as Agnes. She was discovered as a teenager, at 14 made her first film, and was chosen to play the role of Agnes at the Comedie Francaise. When she filmed the part she was only 17, a youth like Agnes, and French writers called her "astonishing" and "unforgettable." She came to be considered the best young French stage actress in years, and fared equally well as Victor Hugo's daughter in Truffaut's *The Story of Adele H.* (1975), although her recent films have been less successful. ■

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DIVERSIONS

SR Competition No. 34

In one of Flannery O'Connor's stories a character intones, with proper gravity, "Judge not, lest ye be not judged." Rare is the reader these days who detects anything wrong with that: the *tune* is so right. A graduate student of ours once solemnly attempted to quote Santayana in a seminar: "Those who cannot forget the past," said she, "are condemned to remember it." It took the combined efforts of several first-rate minds, including ours, to convince her that this was delightful nonsense, but still nonsense. Please send us the ingenious, stupid, or inspired misquotations that you have actually heard. If you haven't heard any, make them up. The single rule is that they must *sound* so right as to provoke a kind of aural doubletake. And if at first you don't succeed, fail, fail again.

Entries for Competition No. 34 must be received by March 1 and the winners will be announced in the May-June issue. Send submissions to *SR* Competition No. 34, *Saturday Review*, Box 704, Kingston, New Jersey 08528. All entries become the property of *SR*.

Winners of No. 31

Wow! If that was a Near Death Experience, we don't think much of it. The Figure of Light looked far too much like the old track coach who was forever giving us extra laps for coming in last. Still, it *was* restful, and here we are back again, full of pep and vinegar. We even have the report on No. 31, which someone thoughtfully buried with us, along with our pencil and our aspirin. Renewed congratulations to our three winners, or to their heirs & assigns, as the case may be!

The idea was to send us actual utterances, spoken by normal adult people, that sounded sensible enough in context but out of it, wildly improbable. "Unpremeditated surrealism" was our happy coinage for this fugitive art form, and we happily repeat here. *Three* such sentences were called for. Practically no one sent three. With the supine complacency that lies at the heart of this competition, we scrapped the rule. One rule, however, remains intact, sort of. Spare us, we pleaded, the lisped inanities of cute grandchildren. As a grandfather ourselves, we knew how futile this was. We got enough of the stuff to last the *Reader's Digest* through its third centennial. For instance, Alan Whitney of Winnetka, Illinois, alleges the following to have been said by a girl-child in San Francisco in 1915 (the year of the World's Fair, as Mr. Whitney helpfully adds): "Him doddy got more funny eyes nor mine do." Her weak grasp of the language had been weakened still further by the prevalence at that time of Chinese domestics. We'll be right back after we fwow up.

Some of you (happy few) understood that the contest involved neither infants who had yet to master the language nor adults who would never do so, but speakers of sentences that, shorn of their circumstance, mimic delirium.

Our first-prize winner, Tom Lester of West Los Angeles, California, seems to us certifiably sane. But even the sane sometimes oversleep, which can make them say odd things. So when reader Lester had waited beyond endurance outside the single bathroom of his apartment, lengthily occupied by his wife and daughter, he confesses to having shouted: "You two spend more time in there than I do put together!" If there is vernacular genius, this is it. Freud himself would relish this spectacle of a personality disintegrating, and *enjoying* it. Pull yourself together, Tom Lester, and blow your $25 on something silly.

Second prize to a second-time winner, Benjamin Urrutia of Albany, New York. If you think that the vile conditions of modern warfare preclude the noble old chivalric human relations, listen to this sentence, said by one Israeli soldier to another in a *very* crowded army truck in late 1975: "May I put my knee between your legs?" Strong men must have wept at the forlorn sweetness of this request. Although, come to think of it, was it not precisely "out of the strong" that there "came forth sweetness" (Judges 14:14)?

Third prize goes to one of the few people who did send in three sentences: Gloria Kanin of Cranbury, New Jersey. Her sentences are not only satisfyingly crazy but also cunningly linked by a sort of anatomico-culinary theme. 1) "... ow an eye in the oven," said her mother, busy elsewhere in the kitchen. 2) Her husband, sniffing the roasting lamb, said, "I think your leg is burning." 3) And at the dinner party for which the above, we presume, were the preparations, a guest wore a garment described by its designer in these immortal words: "This is a lovely gown with a very low neckline for easy entertaining."

PUZZLES

Literary Crypt No. 179

ACY ANXIETY FLAC HXRY VXZAYRUXNONS ZXWYTH LH ACOA ACYS ONY QITT XQ UYXUTY ZXA FXNAC DZXFLZM.

ZXNROZ VXIHLZH

Wit Twister No. 191

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

With fearsome _ _ _ _ _ _ and
graphic illustration,
This _ _ _ _ _ _ _ warns against
the grape and grain.
The _ _ _ _ _ _ _ read with tipsy
concentration
And _ _ _ _ _ _ _! quickly fill their
mugs again.

Mrs. Thomas E. Harris
Alexandria, Virginia

Answers next issue

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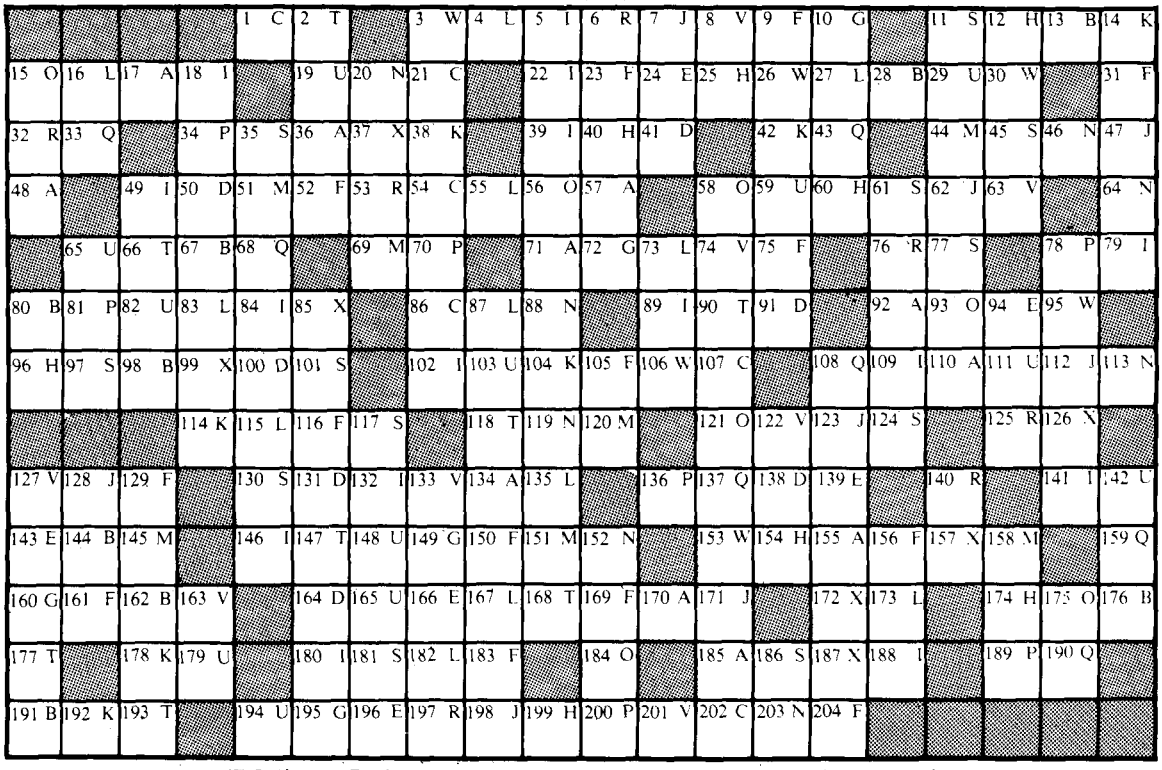

TUNICK DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 1

Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes. The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The grey squares are the spaces between words. If there is no grey square at the end of a line, a word carries over to the line below. The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram: so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

CLUES	WORDS
A. Radio's "Shadow." once (full name)	17 36 57 110 134 71 170 92 185 48 155
B. Gentleman of Verona	176 28 67 80 144 162 191 13 98
C. Myshkin, et al.	1 21 54 86 107 202
D. Sneaky evildoer	41 50 91 100 131 138 164
E. Published	24 94 166 143 196 139
F. British repeller Saxon invaders	156 9 75 129 161 23 52 150 105 204 31 183 116 169
G. Edward IV's Jane, TV's Dinah	10 72 160 195 149
H. Companions of brassies and cleeks	40 60 96 174 12 199 25 154
I. "Truth is never pure ..." --Wilde (3 wds.)	102 18 109 132 39 79 188 180 141 22 89 49 146 5 84
J. Disposed of documents, in in a way	47 128 112 7 62 123 198 171
K. Trustingly (2wds.)	42 14 114 178 104 192 38
L. Glenn Miller band vocalist (full name)	16 55 115 73 173 27 83 87 135 167 4 182

CLUES	WORDS
M. One who suffers from I-strain?	120 145 69 44 151 158 51
N. Epithet of Holy Roman Emperor Lothair II(2 wds.)	88 119 46 113 64 152 203 20
O. "Open Sesame" sayer (full name)	15 56 175 58 184 121 93
P. Swaziland capital	34 78 81 136 189 70 200
Q. Illegally ahead of the puck	108 43 159 190 137 33 68
R. A paladin of Charlemagne	53 76 32 140 6 197 125
S. Multi-metered, as a line of poetry	130 181 61 35 97 101 124 77 45 117 186 11
T. "People of the land" (Gen. 23:7)	147 66 90 118 168 2 177 193
U. The action's efficacy (2 Lat. wds.)	142 65 111 179 148 194 165 29 19 82 59 103
V. Blocks with chocks nails a rumor	201 74 122 127 8 163 133 63
W. Ukases	26 30 153 3 95 106
X. Newspaper employee	85 172 99 187 126 157 37

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AFTERTHOUGHTS

Bruce VanWyngarden

Promises to Keep

It has been said that you can't wade into the same river twice—the water flows on, a leaf falls to the surface, the wind stirs reflections of moving clouds, a fish swims—the river is inexorably changed. So it is for readers who pick up this issue of the *Saturday Review*. With the advent of a new publisher and editor and the passage of several months since the supposed "final" issue in June, changes have indeed occurred. It is our intention, however, to keep the ripples down and hope you'll continue to find the water clear and inviting.

Far too much has been said and written about the magazine's move to Missouri. Technically, it's simply not a problem. Aesthetically? Judge for yourself. I happen to think our fresh eyes are an advantage. As a bimonthly, we'll be less concerned with what is "hot," and more interested in what will endure. We'll leave the newest "mega-exhibit" and the latest cultural "cover boys" to the other media. So often these days, what is new passes for what is true. We'll be a little harder to convince.

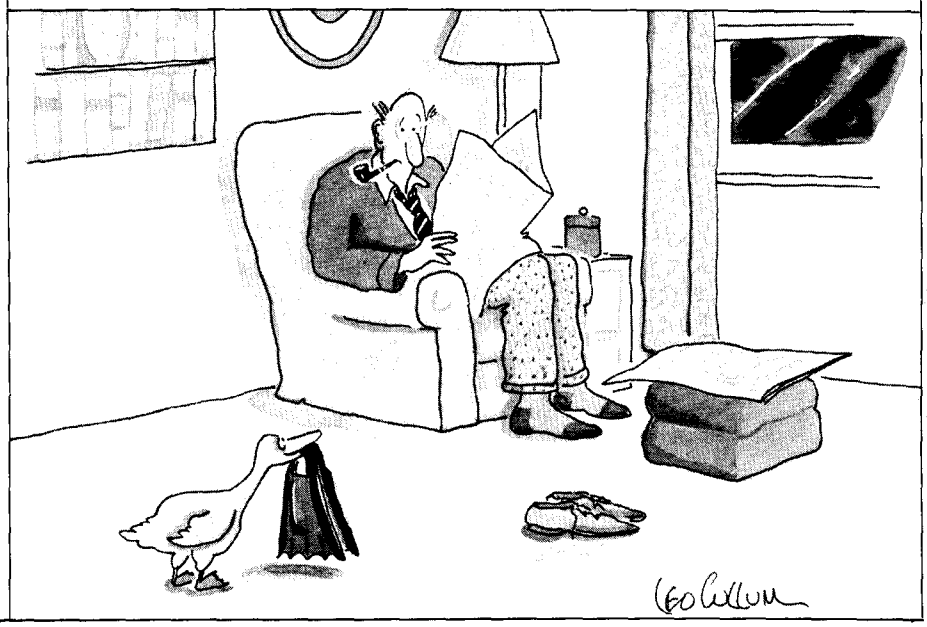
We'll try to surprise you. We want to search out the rising star and dust off the overlooked gem. We're going to trust our writers, our columnists and our instincts to bring you stories that are provocative and interesting. Too much of what is written about culture is pompous. Too many writers seem to think that if they overload their work with obscure references it will mask their lack of real ideas. Instead of aiming to enlighten and inform, they seek only to impress. We promise not to be impressed.

In speaking of those who write about art, we are reminded of those who create it. What is the artist's role in our society? It's one of those questions that seems to beg for pomposity, but perhaps we can avoid it if we return to our metaphor of the river. There we find the artist seated on the bank. While the rest of us have neatly catalogued "river" in our brains as something we drive over on our way to work, the artist is describing, singing, painting and, most importantly, making us *aware* of the incredible impermanence that surrounds us. Creating a new vision of the river is his job and we'd better pay attention to him. If we don't, he's liable to throw a bucket of river water on us. In fact, sometimes the only thing that separates the truly great artist from the merely splashy one is knowing when to throw the bucket.

In putting together this issue, we were subjected to more than a little unsolicited advice—some of it constructive, some of it not. One of the best pieces of counsel was to reinstate cartoon editor Clarence Brown. You've no idea how wonderful it is, when one is in the midst of the incessant details of magazine production, to receive a package of ten or twelve cartoons in the mail. Since the esteemed Professor Brown has weaned the dozens he receives down to the ten or twelve best, we are guaranteed a solid dozen chuckles, no flat tires.

In our next issue we'll feature an authoritative preview of the London theater season by Roland Gelatt and a profile of the host of National Public Radio's *A Prairie Home Companion,* Garrison Keillor. Also in the works is a story about the up-and-coming off-Broadway composers, a look at artists' colonies, and a survey of the summer music festivals. We also promise to continue to interview writers and artists who will stimulate and provoke you.

On a final note, we encourage you to write us. Tell us what you think about our first issue and what you'd like to see. With your help, we intend that *Saturday Review* shall have a future. ■



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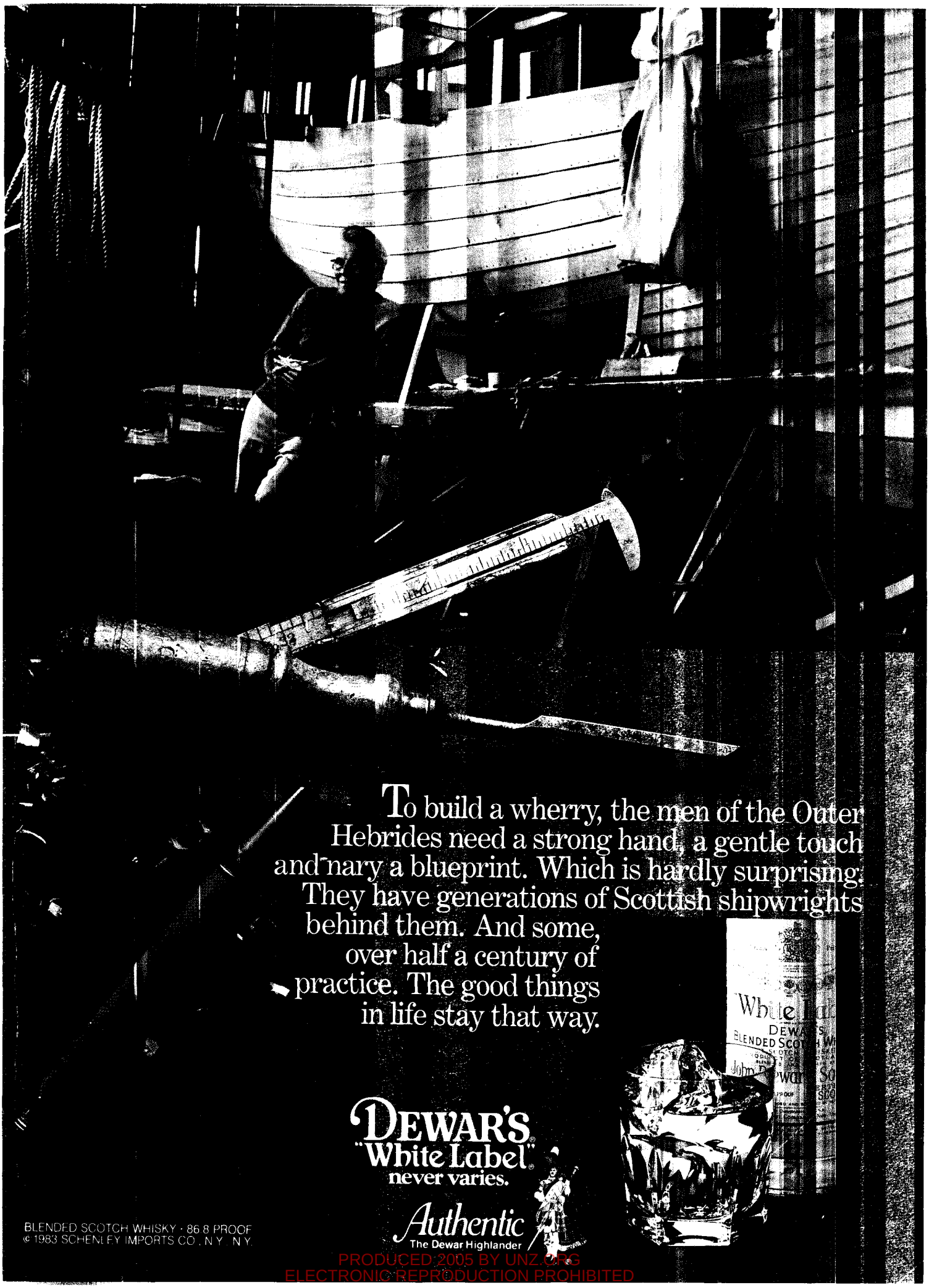
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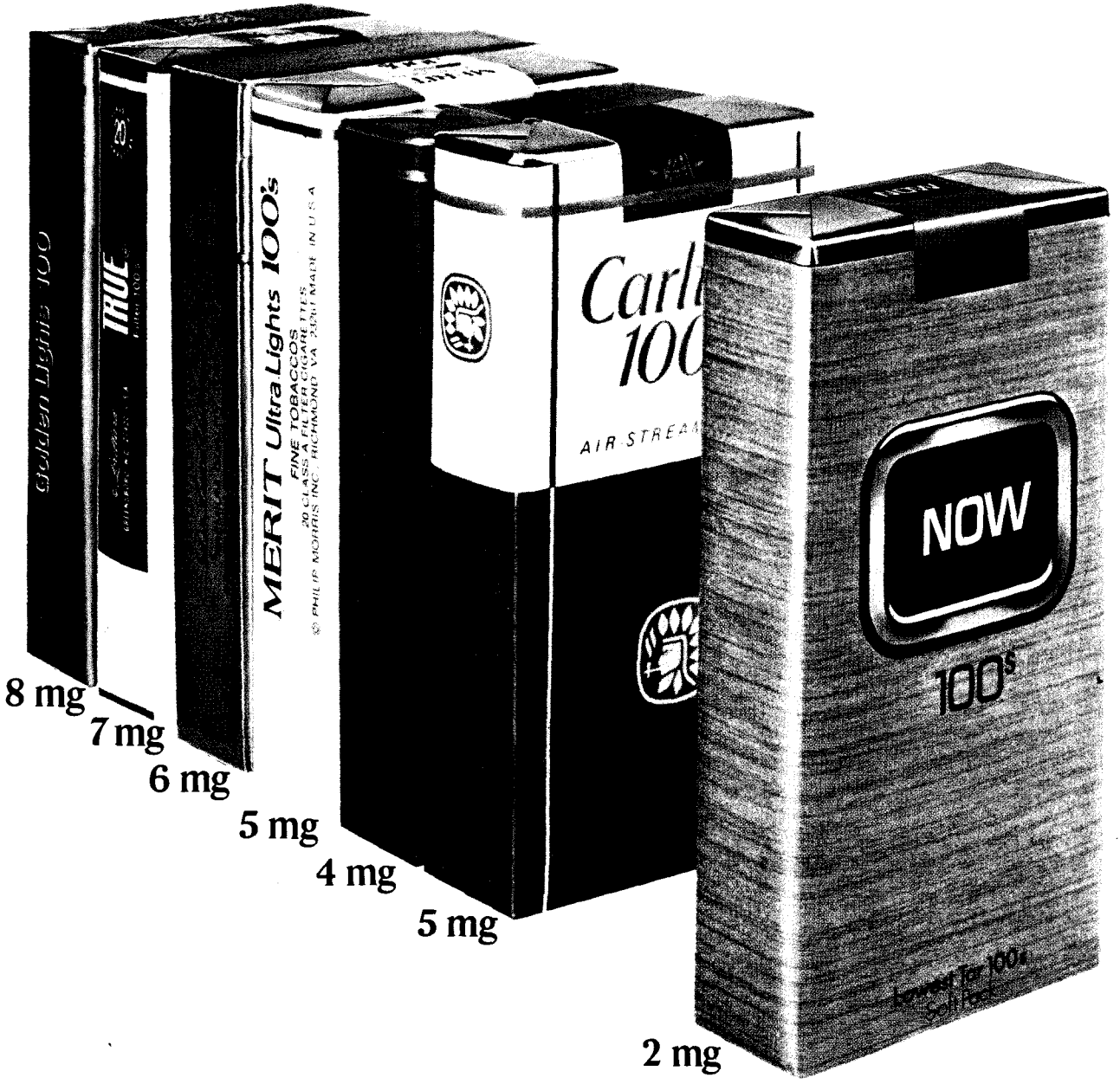

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